

**INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
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**SPIRIT  
IN  
PEDAGOGICAL RELATIONS:  
A STUDY OF CONSTRAINTS AND POSSIBILITIES**

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*Resimon*

# SPIRIT IN PEDAGOGICAL RELATIONS

## A STUDY OF CONSTRAINTS AND POSSIBILITIES

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the possibilities for **Spirit** as a key term and value position in the development of pedagogical relationships in schools.

It begins with an examination of the nature of Spirit from different standpoints and assesses its wider connections to the spiritual, religious and moral aspects of the human condition. This preliminary analysis lays the basic foundations from which to develop a greater understanding of the importance of these connections in pedagogy.

Attention is then given to the importance of the pedagogical relationship as a central issue in education generally. The role that tradition plays in shaping this aspect of pedagogy, as a distinct practice, is discussed. Also discussed is the need to enrich and expand traditional meanings in order to meet the challenges and constraints of contemporary practice.

Arguing that a renewed vocabulary of spirit is not only necessary but vital for enriching traditional meanings and practices, the study builds this renewed vocabulary in two ways: (1) through an analysis of the implications of the philosophical perspectives of Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas and John Macmurray, and (2) through the reconstruction of pedagogies of spirit in the work of two teachers.

The study concludes with four recommendations for approaching the continued reconstruction of pedagogies of spirit in the development of teacher education programmes.



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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis has developed from my involvement in the education system as a secondary schoolteacher, an LEA Advisor and a TTA external assessor for the employment based routes into teaching. It has provided me with a means of teasing out the connecting threads which run through each of my different roles and represents my abiding interest and ongoing commitment to the field of education.

The story started during my time as a classroom teacher, when I became aware that I was intuitively using two approaches to structure my understanding of the pedagogical experience. One approach, which I came to regard as my public one, consisted of teaching the curriculum, following the scheme of work and ensuring that students were achieving the learning objectives and outcomes specified for each lesson. The other approach I saw as bringing a kind of vitality to my work with pupils through my personal commitment and interest, not only in their intellectual development, but also in their growth towards maturity and self responsibility. In other words, there was a specific relational significance to what I was doing and hoping to achieve. This latter approach remained a background picture; an aspect of the pedagogical experience which I felt was separate from and went beyond the mere act of teaching. Indeed it is fair to say that I added both experience and language to put into words what I was trying to do and achieve.

It was later, when I became a professional LEA Advisor, that two strands in my thinking converged to enable me bring a greater clarity to my earlier experience as a classroom teacher. The opportunity to work with both new and experienced teachers in different school contexts served to further confirm what I had already intuited, that there is a real difference in meaning: between the term *pedagogy* – in the institutionalised sense – which is equated with teaching and adherence to the standards based curriculum; and the *pedagogical relation*, which brings a relational meaning to what teachers are doing in their work with pupils, because they feel addressed by them and motivated to understand them in a caring way. It is in this realm that many of the themes, which have become impoverished in the mainstream discourse about pedagogy, come alive: themes such as the moral, personal, ethical and community.

Based on this practical experience of working with teachers I also noticed that the quality of this special relationship was the one constant factor of school experience that both teachers and pupils found meaningful and necessary for good effective teaching and learning to be achieved. When the teaching act enters the realm of the pedagogical relation, it becomes something more for the student than a means to an end; it becomes a teaching and life experience which has significance in and of itself. If this is the case, then surely greater emphasis should be placed on this aspect of teachers' work in order to isolate the qualities and actions that sustain relations that are pedagogically significant for both teachers and pupils. In response to this query I introduce the concept of spirit, as my distinctive theme, and as one of the concepts yet to be explored as a relational category within the discourse of pedagogy.

### **WHY SPIRIT?**

In the next sections I will give an account of how I came to adopt spirit as my organising theme. I will then proceed to explore the concept of personhood as a means of illustrating that spirit is as much a part of what it means to become a whole person as reason or the intellect.

In the course of my ongoing work with teachers, together with my reading of the literature on pedagogy, a second strand in my thinking was opened up when I encountered the writings of Martin Buber. Buber not only devoted considerable attention to the problems of pedagogy, he also regarded the quality of the pedagogical relationship as the deciding factor for inspiring teachers to accept the responsibility of their calling. I felt particularly *addressed* by his diagnosis of the *spirit-situation* of the age which he saw as being threatened by excessive functionalisation at the expense of the human spirit and human relationships: a situation he blamed for bringing about a lack of faith in spirit, especially among the young, leaving them abandoned to the “despotism” of the *It*.

I read how Buber had to make the evolution himself, from a mystical thinker, to an understanding of authentic spirit which has to be actualised in the world, in relationships between man and man and between teacher and learner. I came to realise that, although Buber's thinking has influenced thinkers from a broad variety of backgrounds, it has not altered outlook in any way in mainstream contemporary

pedagogy. Although educators (Stevenson 1963; Winetrout 1963; Italo 1963; Rosenblatt 1971; Borouity 1971; Gordon 1973; Hilliard 1973) have studied his views on the aims and content, as well as his characterisation of the pedagogical relation, their effects have not stretched much beyond a familiarity. It has not gripped what Buber would term “the whole being” of the educator.

Winetrout (1963) describes Buber as one of four prophetic voices in education who deserve to be better known by teachers. He places Buber alongside such thinkers as Albert Camus, Albert Schweitzer and Arnold Toynbee, but privileges Buber’s voice as the one which speaks most directly to teachers. Although Winetrout provides a useful and informative summary of the main gist of Buber’s ideas, concepts and insights, he fails to give sufficient priority to the spirit of Buber’s address: which is the realisation that the most important task for the educator is to establish the meaning of the *between* in education (as access to the meaning of how we can become more fully human, more fully persons) and then to reconstruct this relation in each new era in favour of building more authentic and relational school communities.

Other contributors, such as Rosenblatt (1971), attempt to translate Buber’s writings into a framework of directives for establishing a dialogic process during the examination and evaluation of pupil progress. Whilst Rosenblatt’s account provides a detailed analysis of Buber’s main principles of I-Thou relating and of dialogue, he pays too much attention to the laying down of rules by which dialogue might be achieved, under-emphasising the importance of the relation that unfolds between a person who really turns towards an other as a specific person to be addressed and heard. Since no two dialogic meetings are the same, Buber maintains that each encounter between teacher and pupil is a new event each time it takes place, hence all that can be suggested is a direction – an indication of the way rather than a formal laying down of rules.

But all of this is beside the point, for my interest in such secondary literature extends only insofar as it articulates with the important challenge I set myself at the outset, which was to give priority to a spirit orientated foundation for the pedagogical relation which brings a sharper focus to its relational, ethical and personal dimensions.

There was a sense of excitement and inspiration when I arrived at these insights which prompted me to begin this thesis. A “bisociation” of two strands in my thinking had taken place – my interest in the quality of the pedagogical relation and the *address of spirit* which came through Buber’s writings. This thesis represents the creative act resulting from the association of these two ideas. As Buber predicted:

*“Through one historical era after another [though] the spirit may seem dethroned and exiled, it does not lose its power. Again and again, unexpectedly and unpredictably, it causes what is intrinsic in the course of history through its agents...”* (Buber, 1963, p.120).

And also:

*“...if it [education] at last rises up, it will be able to strengthen the light-spreading force in the hearts of the doers – how much it can do this cannot be guessed, but only learned in action. With education properly conceived, the new generation can illuminate the grey face of the human world”* (Buber, 1955 p.84).

As would be expected, Buber’s thoughts and writings make a significant contribution to the grounding of spirit in this work. However, this thesis should be read as both my response to the spirit of Buber’s address and also my distinctive contribution to the ongoing dialogue of what constitutes responsive practice in pedagogy.

## **SPIRIT AS AN AIM FOR EDUCATION**

In order to introduce any meaningful conceptualisation of spirit in the development of pedagogical relations in schools, we will need to consider how this concept articulates with the aims for education. Put another way, what is spirit’s educational significance? What would teachers be aiming to achieve educationally when adopting a pedagogical ideal of spirit in their work? As indicated in my earlier discussion, the relevance of spirit in terms of contemporary pedagogy has received scant attention, although some attempts have been made to define its use for spiritual education (Carr 1995; 1996; Hay, et al 1998). The task I have set myself in the following sections is

to identify a suitable educational substitute, capable of helping us to think through the specific educational aims for which this study will make a contribution.

All our educational efforts, I suggest, whether stated explicitly or otherwise, embody a particular belief or model of the sort of person we wish our students to become. Hence how students are treated and what are judged to be appropriate goals for their education and development depends on the beliefs we hold about the *concept of a person* (Pring, 1984; Best, 1996). It is worthwhile exploring whether, and in what way, an understanding of how we become whole *persons* can shed light on the becoming of spirit as a concrete educational aim.

There are three distinct questions that we will need to attend to. First, what is a person? In other words, what defines who a person is and is not and on what basis? Second, is a person a discrete property, or is there something more dynamic which has to be developed in order to achieve full personhood? Third, how exactly is spirit an aspect of personhood: what does it contribute; how is it implicated in the process of achieving wholeness as a person? I will address each of these questions in the discussions which follow.

## **WHAT IS A PERSON?**

At first glance it may seem that there is really no question here at all. To a strong tradition being a person is no different from being human; one is born a person just as one is a born human being. One need only look around to discover two kinds of entities in the world, namely persons and things, and dividing lines appear obviously identified with the lines between human and non-human (Tallon, 1973). To such a viewpoint there is no question of becoming a person: an entity either is or is not a person, but does not *become* one. There would seem, in fact, to have been no such question for ancient philosophy, nor even for medieval or modern philosophy (Copleston 1996). In the early part of the sixth century AD Boethius defined the person as “an individual substance of rational nature”. This definition, which became classical and was adopted by St Thomas Aquinas for example, obviously implies that every human being is a person, since every human being is (to employ the philosophical terms of Boethius) an individual substance of rational nature. If one cannot be more or less a human being, as far as “substance” is concerned, one cannot

be more or less a person. One may act as a person ought not to act, or in a way that is unbefitting a human person, one may even lose the normal use of one's reason, but one does not in this way become depersonalised in the sense of ceasing to be a person. According to St Thomas, a disembodied soul is not, strictly speaking, a person, since a disembodied soul is no longer a complete human substance, but every complete human substance is always and necessarily a person (op cit, p.103).

In classical Greek tradition we find that the idea of being a person was an object of the greatest fascination (Burn 1990). Greeks portrayed themselves as cunning and self interested; as courageous, aggressive and ruthless; as highly intelligent and endlessly talkative; as curious and observant; and as proud and dangerously susceptible to over confidence. The ideal of a person was essentially masculine and reflected a society in which males dominated.

At the height of Athenian civilisation, before the time of Plato, the faculty of reason was believed to work together with the emotions to bring about an harmonious equilibrium in the psychological forces. This would result in a balanced and "whole person". For the Greeks a person's sense of wholeness extended to include all those phenomena, whether observed or imagined, which constituted the universe (op cit, p.140). Of particular importance at that time was a person achieving excellence, or *arête*. The ideal of *arête*, which originated in the heroic age of Homer, meant something that was infinitely adaptable. Persons were born with certain natural capacities and their ultimate purpose was to develop these as fully as humanly possible. In particular, abilities should be displayed, tested, refined and strengthened, primarily through action. So, for the Greeks, a person was expected to develop the intellectual and spiritual capacities to search for the Good or the Truth (Burn 1990, p.142).

By the time of the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason, persons were regarded above all else, as human beings – defined by the ability to think (Mill 1962). The intellectual foundation for this image of the person was built on the stance of René Descartes, *cogito ergo sum*. According to this view the process of thinking is carried out unassisted and alone. So a person's identity can be established with little or no help from others. Relationships have no significant role to play because meaning

comes from an inner world. Spiritual, moral and aesthetic awareness was also thought to arise from the workings of the mind (op cit, p.137). The idea of a person became no more than an autonomous, thinking self.

With a liberated intellect, at liberty not simply to celebrate but to reflect upon and explore its own significance, the thinking self turned its full attention to questioning its own right to exist. There emerged successive assaults upon many of the assumptions placed on the centrality of persons for moral, spiritual and cultural development. Adorno (1973) for instance, talked of the “withering of the subject”, its shrunken consciousness, its loss of awareness, spontaneity and truth. For Laing (1960) the predicament of the person lay not so much in its diminution or diffusion as being voided of content. The ground was prepared for Lévi-Strauss (1966, p.247) to declare that “The ultimate goal of the human sciences ... [is] ... not to constitute but to dissolve man.” While the poet Ashberry (1992) considered that the foretold demise of the individual had, to all intents and purposes, arrived: just being a person, therefore, does not work anymore.

These movements to de-centre and disperse the idea of the person have been balanced by a renewed attention on the continued importance of persons in contemporary philosophy. Thus we get a focus on the *freedom* of persons in the existentialists, and on *relationality*, particularly in the writings of such pioneers as Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas and John Macmurray, who we will be meeting again later on in the study. When taken together, their work brings a focus on the dynamic relational aspects of the human person that makes how one becomes a person an explicit question.

In a relational model of personhood there are two aspects to the concept of a person which are important for the ideal of spirit to be actualised. The first is a feature of all human beings and is concerned with the gradual acquisition of capacities, attributes and qualities which distinguish human persons from objects. Spirit becomes active in this aspect of a person as an animating principle that inspires awareness of certain foundational qualities, attributes and capacities as potential resources for persons to develop. These are identified in my discussion in Chapter 1 and include resources such as special talents, the capacity for invention and the presence of an intentional



consciousness. The second aspect of the concept of a person is the need that people have to become fully human, or to achieve wholeness of being, through entering into relationships with other persons. Here spirit becomes a relational and self transcending principle which connects self to other and to community. In the second part of my discussion below, I will focus more closely on the development of these two aspects of personhood.

## **PERSONS AND OBJECTS**

Pring (1984) provides a useful framework which helps us to think about some of the main distinguishing features which separate *persons* from *objects*. First, a person is a tangible object that can be seen, touched, measured and weighed etc. In these respects a person is like any other physical object and can be made to do things and be manipulated accordingly. Second, persons also have certain qualities and capacities which serve to separate them from being mere objects (these I will comment on later on in my discussion). Third, a person interacts with the world in a purposeful way; that is, persons are intentional beings. Fourth, persons are conscious of the world around them. They communicate with each other and are therefore capable of relating in a meaningful way. Fifth, persons possess moral attributes which form an indispensable part of their ability to make moral appraisals of other persons, and on which to base their judgements about issues such as trust and honesty in their relationships with others.

We can make a strong case for saying that one can distinguish between a human being (a member of a biological species) and a “person”. Such a distinction is implicit in attitudes adopted towards certain individuals and groups: for example, a foetus, even when a properly formed member of the human species, may be regarded by some as not yet a “person”. Similarly, some people, from different races, have been treated as non-persons. The dividing line, in this instance, is the availability of education which can help people become more fully “persons” – that is, help them to acquire in a more complete way those qualities of reasoning, feelings and responsibility which distinguishes someone as a “person” which, as a young child, he or she possessed in a minimal and undeveloped way (Pring, 1984, p.14).

The influence of education for the development of “persons” in this framework can be conceived in two ways. If education is treated as a “thing”, or a “package of things”, to be acquired or attended to simply as a means to an end, it becomes merely a commodity that can be bought and sold, distributed equally or unequally, used or not for personal advantage without making any significant difference to the personal being of “persons”. However, if the education a person receives alters how she values herself and others around her and also alters her power of motivation to change herself, then it has made a significant contribution to the development of the personal being of the “person”. In terms of the kinds of qualities education aims to develop there are seven main areas (op cit, p.23):

*Intellectual virtues*: these are dispositions, such as the concern for getting at the truth or concern for matching conclusions to evidence, which are characteristics of persons engaged in intellectual enquiry. A teacher aims to develop children’s intellectual virtues when initiating them into certain forms of subject knowledge and understanding.

*Moral virtues*: are dispositions such as modesty, kindness, patience, generosity, which govern the emotions. Since there is no universal agreement on what should go into a list of moral virtues, schools are given some flexibility to decide which ones they want to encourage or discourage.

*Character traits*: a distinction can be made between moral and intellectual virtues on the one hand and character traits on the other. The latter are those qualities of the “will” such as determination, perseverance or courage. For example, Hitler may have been virtuous but he had – unfortunately – a strong character (op cit, p.23)

*Social competencies*: this phase incorporates dispositions such as the sense of responsibility, moral habits and worthwhile interests. Competencies which come under this heading include the ability to deal with certain kinds of social situations such as the ability to socialise and talk confidently with other people at social events. Also included is the ability to display basic good manners and attitudes towards others.

*Practical knowledge:* apart from moral qualities and social competencies persons can also be assessed in terms of the practical abilities they may have. When we refer to someone as being a practical person we are commenting on their ability to solve problems and to display intelligence in a range of technical tasks, such as repairing cars or DIY jobs around the home.

*Theoretical knowledge:* in thinking about the sort of person one can become we cannot ignore the ability to understand concepts, beliefs, principles and insights gained through theoretical study. Being a person, as opposed to being an object, presupposes some developed form of consciousness: but the form of consciousness can be developed in different ways. For example, a “religious person” has certain religious concepts and understandings without which he cannot be referred to as that sort of person. Again, in the absence of political concepts (let us say of the liberal democratic kind), a person will have a different form of political consciousness that might well affect the sort of person she becomes – she will see things and thereby relate to people differently (op cit, p.24)

*Personal values:* the development of moral qualities and character traits, although connected, is not synonymous with the personal values that a person eventually decides to hold. Two people can be equally gentle and considerate but disagree on the value of pacifism for example. Alternatively, two people can be equally honest and yet disagree on the value of private property – to the extent that the same action may be seen by one as stealing but not by the other. The point is that persons are free to form their own set of personal values.

## **RESPECT FOR PERSONS**

If we are to accept that the development of “persons” is a good thing then we need to comment on the role that respect plays as an element in this development. The most influential position on this issue is found in the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1797). At the very core of Kant’s ethical theory is the claim that human beings, as persons, must be respected because they are ends in themselves. To be an end is to have value that is intrinsic and absolute. As ends in themselves, human persons have a distinctive worth, which Kant calls “dignity”. The moral response that is both appropriate to and categorically required by dignity is respect. In Kant’s theory of

value, dignity is the supreme value and only persons have dignity; thus, our most fundamental moral obligation is to respect persons in virtue of their dignity.

In addition to dignity as the principle which underlies “respect for persons” this phrase can also be analysed in terms of the kinds of attitudes persons have towards each other (Downie & Telfer, 1969; Downie, et al, 1974). There are three main features which define what we mean by an attitude (Downie, et al, 1974, p.135). The first is that attitudes are two sided, they must be towards something and, secondly, they must stand for a disposition to feel and act in certain ways towards the object of the attitude. A third feature of an attitude is that it involves a belief about the nature of its object. For example, an attitude cannot logically be said to be one of hope unless it is directed to an object which is believed in some sense to be *good* to the holder (op cit, p.136). When we apply these three features of an attitude in terms of respect for persons we arrive at different levels at which respectful attitudes between persons might be said to function.

At the first and simplest level a person can have an attitude of respect for another because she recognises the other person’s right to have a mind of her own, a distinctive point of view. However, although at this level a person may believe that they respect others in this way they may, in reality, demonstrate a disregard for others in practice (Pring, 1984, p.28). At this first level, the respect that is shown requires only minimal recognition of the other’s status as an individual. It contains no reference to how one feels towards another, since respect is only shown to the other person’s capacity to reason. In contrast to this restricted sense of the notion of respect is a second attitude where people’s particular wants, feelings and interests do matter over and above the points of view they hold as individuals. This deepening of respect for persons contains an element of care for another and a recognition that to show respect is not purely a cognitive act but contains a feeling element. Being able to feel things from another’s point of view is part of respecting the other person as someone who has distinctive feelings. Pring (op cit, p.29) however, argues that personal respect should not be considered to be the same as entering into a personal relationship, since respecting another person may require keeping one’s distance. At the same time, a person can dislike another person but respect him/her nonetheless because they can see beyond the personality of the person.

These points might be summarised in the following way: at its deepest level respect for persons is a principle – that is, it is a recognition of the person's *dignity* as a human being. As an attitude, respect for persons can be interpreted in three ways. It may be aimed at helping pupils (i) to become autonomous, self determining persons; or (ii) to become persons in the fuller sense by identifying the powers and qualities which are in need of development and (iii) to develop important personal qualities through educational endeavours which are essential for achieving personhood.

This brings us to the point where we can now consider how the notion of being “more fully a person” – and not just an autonomous individual – informs our understanding of spirit as a relational concept implicit in the notion of personhood.

### **SPirit AND THE WHOLE PERSON**

Wholeness, in the relational model of personhood I am developing, means that the fullness of personhood can only be achieved through entering into relations with others (Tallon, 1973, p.65). Whereas the first aspect of becoming a person is satisfied by developing one's individuality and personality, individual personal growth becomes enlivened, deepened and fulfilled by the various relationships (interpersonal, social, communal) which constitute human existence. The nurturing of relational capacities in children therefore becomes as important as the provision of opportunities for self expression and growth.

In *The Spirit of the Child*, Hay et al (1988) found that when children spoke of spirituality they were richly aware of the importance of their relations to others and to their environment. They displayed a natural *relational consciousness* which Hay et al describes as an “ever present aspect of being human” (op cit, p.45). Relational consciousness in the child was found to be separate from and prior to the discursive intellect, existing as an all *pervasive knowingness*, or human predisposition, which transcends self preservation in its altruistic concern and care for others (op cit, p.147). If we accept that children have access to a relational awareness at a young age, then we can surmise that its presence does not make children naturally solitary. At its most basic level it manifests itself in children as the desire to belong, to form friendships,

concern for others less fortunate than themselves and sharing with others. For this reason relationality becomes the touchstone of what it means to be a “whole person”.

In a relational model for personhood, the pedagogical relationship assumes a new significance because it must be seen as a model of relationship which defines for pupils, not only a sense of self and its potential as an autonomous being, but also what it means to be human in relation with others.

In order for teachers to make any substantial use of the model I am proposing, however, they will need to be able to identify where, in the aims of education (as laid out in the National Curriculum), there is potential for its purposeful development. In the final sections below I address this issue by identifying specific areas of the curriculum where spirit, as an integral part of personhood, can be developed.

## CURRICULUM

The government makes explicit the goals for education that schools should follow in a mandatory National Curriculum for Primary and Secondary schools. The intentions for English schools have **four bases**. First is the National Curriculum Council’s guidance and discussion documents, specifically: *The Whole Curriculum: Curriculum Guidance 3* (1990); *Education for Citizenship: Curriculum Guidance 8* (1990); and *Spiritual and Moral Development – A Discussion Paper* (1993). These were non-statutory guidelines for the school curriculum, but much of what they said has been incorporated into the statutory National Curriculum rationale. Second, the *Statement of Values* prepared by the National Forum for Values and Community (1997) which is reproduced in the National Curriculum handbook so that schools can use it in planning their own curriculum. Third, the *Citizenship Order* (CO, 1999) that was compiled after the publication of the Crick Report, both these documents influenced the rationale National Curriculum. Since the publication of the National Curriculum the government has given renewed emphasis to a communitarian strand of the National Curriculum in its White Paper (2001).

The rationale for the curriculum is a statutory requirement for all schools, with character building, in particular, emerging as a new policy. The non-statutory framework for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship at Key

Stages 1 and 2, together with the secondary non-statutory framework for personal, social and health education, also forms part of the official guidelines to schools and are continued in the Primary and Secondary National Curriculum handbooks. The Citizenship Order is only compulsory in secondary schools, but there is guidance on citizenship issued to all primary schools.

These documents, taken together, constitute a statement of philosophy for the development of the “Whole Person”, in terms of what pupils are expected to attain and become. By grouping together different extracts from the Secondary Curriculum (DfEE and QCA, 1999), we begin to get a picture of the areas where spirit articulates with the aims of education:

### **PERSONHOOD /SPIRIT**

*“Foremost is a belief in education, at home and at school, as a route to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical and mental development, and thus the well being of the individual ... These include valuing ourselves, our families and other relationships, the wider groups to which we belong, the diversity in our society and the environment in which we live” (NC, 1999, p.10).*

*“Pupils’ spiritual development involves the growth of ... their unique potential ... Pupils’ moral development involves ... a concern for others ... Pupils’ social development involves ... a sense of belonging ... Pupils’ cultural development involves ... a respect for their own culture and that of others ...” (NC, p.21).*

*“Religious education makes a distinctive contribution to ... pupils’... questions related to their spiritual development” (NC, p.21)*

*“Citizenship education will ... create a society where people matter more than things” (NC, p.183).*

*“Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people ... pupils should be taught ... about the nature of friendship to*

*recognise ... positive and constructive relationships ... to communicate confidently with their peers and adults” (NC, p.190).*

*“We value ourselves as unique human beings ... we should ... show others ... they are valued ... resolve disputes peacefully” (NC, p.196).*



## **ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS**

The thesis is organised into three parts: an overview of each of these parts is shown below.

### **PART 1 SPIRIT AND PEDAGOGY**

This part consists of four chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on the nature of Spirit as the organising theme and key term for the thesis. Different “standpoints” are used to illustrate the rich vocabularies which have developed around this concept in different subject disciplines. From these a consolidated characterisation of spirit’s potential as an embodied source of life and personal resource is developed

Chapter 2 considers the pedagogical relation. Following a review of its importance as a central issue in education, three representations of tradition are explored; the moral, the pastoral and the personal. The chapter concludes by arguing that a renewed vocabulary of spirit is not only necessary but vital, if we are to enrich traditional meanings and also expand the range of possible practices for meeting some of the new challenges of contemporary pedagogy.

Chapters 3 & 4 articulate this new vocabulary in a specific fashion, through an analysis of the philosophical perspectives of Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas and John Macmurray. The implications of their thoughts for a renewed understanding of spirit in a pedagogy of relations in terms of self, Other and community is considered together with examples of the different actions and practices to which they draw attention.

### **PART 2 FACTORS UNDERMINING SPIRIT IN PEDAGOGY**

There are two chapters in this part. Chapter 5 consists of a critique of the technical mode of rationality in teaching. It explores some of the consequences for spirit in pedagogical relations as a result of this ideology having become embedded in schools. Particular emphasis is given to the ability of teachers to foster productive relationships with “at risk” students. The chapter concludes with a discussion of six specific constraints to spirit, including some ideas of how we may begin the process of reconstructing spirit in pedagogy in the light of the constraints identified.

Chapter 6 continues the discussion on constraints with a focus on the intensification of the labour process of teaching, particularly the effects of bureaucratically driven time pressures on teacher's workloads and emotional functioning. The chapter concludes with a discussion of current research which seems to suggest a greater willingness on the part of teachers to consider alternative discourses and practises in order to achieve preferred pedagogical identities.

### **PART 3 RECONSTRUCTING SPIRIT IN PEDAGOGY**

This part is organised into three chapters. Chapter 7 describes a "research design" used to collect data for two case studies. The design utilises the tools of interview and a dialogic encounter informed by the ideas of Martin Buber, David Bohm and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Although not a scientific enquiry, as commonly understood, the latter's stratagems and protocols inform my approach to collecting and analysing data and this interpenetrate my research design, giving it a distinctive methodology.

Chapter 8 is a case study of "Sarah". It presents three main story themes which capture her experience of pedagogical relationships and which hold particular significance for her both as a teacher and a learner. A specific outcome of the case is the development of a six-step profile of "Teacher-as-Rescuer" which identifies the experiences and behaviours that characterise the actions of a rescuer in the ethical relation.

Chapter 9 is a case study of "Bethany", which reveals her themes for significant pedagogical relationships. In addition to exploring the different cultural influences and professional challenges which led her to re-discover a talent as a storyteller, particular attention is drawn to how a student-centred curriculum framework can be developed and enriched with spirit characteristics.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS** – This section reflects from the case studies, notably how they extend our knowledge of spirit in pedagogical relations. It makes specific recommendations for how the continued reconstruction of pedagogies of spirit may be approached and supported in the development of teacher education programmes through: (a) an active commitment on the part of teacher educators to

include this pedagogical stance (b) creating spaces in pre-service programmes for the exploration and development of the kinds of pedagogical practices suggested in the study; (c) supporting spirit orientated observation and reflection in field experiences; (d) planning follow-up programmes of in-service support for new teachers, and (e) re-evaluating school-university partnerships to provide opportunities for dialogue on how the on-going development of pedagogies of spirit can be supported in different school contexts.

# **PART 1**

## **SPIRIT AND PEDAGOGY**

### **OVERVIEW**

My study begins with an exploration of the concept of Spirit which is its organising theme and key term. Specifically, it explores the fundamental meaning of this concept as a dimension of the pedagogical relationship.

Chapter 1 focuses on answering the question “what is Spirit?” by providing a review of definitions of it from different standpoints. These are included in order to illustrate the richness of the vocabularies which have developed around spirit when studied from different subject disciplines. My intention at this stage is two-fold. First, to give spirit a sufficiently recognisable “shape” from which a consolidated characterisation of its potential as an embodied source of life and personal resource can be illustrated. Second, to explore its wider connections in the spiritual, religious and the moral: in order to lay the foundations for a greater understanding of the importance of these connections in pedagogy.

In chapter 2, I turn to the second theme of this study – the importance of the pedagogical relationship as a central issue in education. Attention is drawn to this relationship as being a culturally determined practice with a tradition that makes it possible for the teaching profession to learn from past efforts. Following a review of different theoretical perspectives on the role of tradition, the chapter explores three representations of tradition: the moral, the pastoral and the personal. The intention is to show that, although these meanings are traditionally important for shaping the pedagogical relationship as a distinct practice, their connections to spirit have been obscured, or lost altogether, resulting in a narrowing of the range of possibilities for this domain of pedagogy. The chapter concludes that a renewed vocabulary of spirit, which extends and enriches traditional meanings, is not only necessary but vital, if teachers are to meet the new challenges of contemporary pedagogical practice.

Chapters 3 and 4 builds this new vocabulary by giving prominence to philosophical perspectives on the nature of spirit as a relational concept through a discussion of this notion in the writings of Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas and John Macmurray.

The implications of each of their thoughts for a renewed understanding of spirit in a pedagogy of relations – consisting of self, Other and community – will figure significantly in my discussion.

# CHAPTER 1

## DEFINITIONS AND STANDPOINTS

The philosophical literature relating to “spirit” yields two basic ideas in tension with each other - a conception of spirit as *mind* or knowing consciousness, and a conception of spirit as *relationship* (Smith, 1988).

The main focus of this study concerns the latter conception, specifically spirit as a dimension of the pedagogical relation. However, in order not to exclude other legitimate conceptions which are necessary for the task of giving spirit a recognisable “shape”, I begin this inquiry with a review of chosen definitions and standpoints. Smith (1988, p.197) defines a standpoint as “a point of view” by which we mean a certain orientation in looking and thinking as well as a particular way of discoursing.

In taking this approach I am, of course, making the enormous presumption that one can take up a much used and historically important concept such as “spirit” without reference to all the different elements of its tradition. This presumption is necessary because my intention is not to attempt to achieve a total understanding of the concept, but rather to bring together a coherent representation of its development initially as an aspect of human life so that important connections can be made between it and the spiritual, the religious and the moral.

## ETYMOLOGY

The etymological roots of “spirit” reveal its deeper meaning as breath, wind, or animating principle that enlivens, inspires and motivates. The Hebrew word *ruach*, the Greek words *psyche* and *pneuma*, and the Latin word *spiritus* all mean spirit, breath and wind, an indispensable source of human life. The common idea is that *spirit is an invisible power that has important visible effects* (Smith, 1988, p.10). Living things which move themselves do so because they have a special “wind” inside them – the breath of life – when the breath is gone, so is life. Smith suggests that the metaphor of breath and wind has further implications: “For one thing, the wind blows far and wide; the same wind can affect many different things in its own way, and so can be a principle of union and of a certain style. Under the north wind all trees in a forest lean south, notwithstanding their individual differences; with a spirit dwelling within them, a people are equal to a great feat or a distinctive mode of

existence” (op cit, p.10). Breathing and blowing is thus an image of spirit as the life-force or life principle.

In Judeo-Christian understanding, spirit, or the original breath of life, was believed to have originated from God. This is clearly depicted in the Genesis creation story:

*“The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said let there be light, and there was light”* Genesis 1:1.

Later on in the story we read:

*“God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul”* Genesis 2:7.

The word “inspiration” retains a link with this idea of spirit as an animating principle. The Genesis story also points to a notion of spirit as a force able to bring about creation on a number of different levels. Dilts (1994) has suggested, for example, that:

*“The powerful and moving words of Genesis tell a story of creation on a number of levels. In addition to describing what was created, they describe a process of how it was created. They give us a description of “God’s thoughts” in the form of a strategy for creation that has a specific structure”* (Dilts, p.xvii).

From the standpoint of its ancestral roots spirit originates from a divine source, denoting a breathing of life into something, a source of creative potential and “wind” that can blow far and wide.

## **SPIRIT AS PERSONAL GENIUS AND SPECIAL TALENT**

The ancient Greeks and Romans brought new possibilities to our understanding of spirit. Accordingly, this second standpoint is included because of the connections it makes between spirit and its animation of the intellectual and artistic faculties.

Believing it to be a personal protective guardian that attended each individual from birth, the concept of spirit came to form the essence of the Latin word for genius, a familiar example being the daemon that was thought to have inspired Socrates (Dieckman, 1941). The image of the divinely inspired poet or philosopher permeates the dialogues of Plato. Socrates was often warned, by his personal daemon, against certain actions:

*“There is something spiritual which, by divine dispensation, has accompanied me from my childhood up. It is a voice that, when it occurs, always indicates to me a prohibition of something I may be about to do, but never urges me to do anything; and if one of my friends consults me and the voice occurs the same thing happens; it prohibits, and does not allow him to act”* (Theagues, 128d).

A guardian spirit was considered to be the source of inspiration for poets and philosophers by bringing about a suspension of rational reasoning so that deeper sources of creative activity and poetic communication could be accessed.

In addition to the Greek and Latin concept of genius, the term “ingenium” was used to describe an inventive faculty or special kind of intelligence which enabled people to perceive new relationships between existing ideas. Ingenium was most often associated with the idea of “wit” in English or “esprit” in French, a kind of talent which enabled an individual to excel in a particular area. With the appearance of original artistic works, however, invention came to represent more than imitation or copying and so a new terminology was needed to describe what artists were doing to bring something original into being (Smith, 1957). By the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the word “create” came increasingly to dominate the vocabulary and talk of genius was understood almost exclusively as the creative power of the person who embodied it. We are no longer dealing with a personal guardian spirit, nor with a special talent, but



with a creative process. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century an understanding of this process came to dominate psychological research, which eventually developed in two directions, one emphasising unconscious mechanisms, the other, consciously directed acts.

Much of the focus of contemporary studies on creative thinking distinguishes this kind of activity from routine cognition. For example, in his book *The Act of Creation*, Arthur Koestler (1964) coined the term “bisociation” to represent the creative association of ideas as opposed to thinking and action which have become routinised:

*“I have coined the term “bisociation” in order to make a distinction between the routine skills of thinking on a single “plane”, as it were, and the creative act, which, as I try to show, always operates on more than one plane. The former may be called single-minded, the latter a double-minded transition state of unstable equilibrium where the balance of both emotion and thought is disturbed” (op cit; p.35-36).*

For the purposes of this study, I have brought these earlier vocabularies on the nature of spirit together into a proposed framework for thinking about its different meanings:

- i. *Spirit-as-breath* that motivates and inspires. It is this aspect of spirit which enables individuals to breathe new life into situations, to inspire others and to change something which has become routine into something dynamic
- ii. *Spirit-as-special-talent* for doing certain things easily and well. This aspect of spirit moves individuals to rediscover talents which they can use to build further skills, knowledge and experience in order to develop the capability for invention.
- iii. *Spirit-as-creator* is the aspect of spirit which organises and integrates the different qualities into a strategy for creation. It moves individuals to implement and realise a creative strategy by taking the steps to put it into effect.

## SPIRIT IN ARCHETYPAL THEORY

One of the main standpoints on the nature of spirit in psychological research has been formulated by Jung in his archetypal theory of the psyche. Widely read in ancient literature and myths, Jung began formulating his archetypal theory at the beginning of the twentieth century. As a young psychiatrist he noticed that there were dramatic but seemingly inexplicable correspondences between the dreams of his patients and the motifs and images found in foundational myths in ancient poetry, epics and religious texts (Mayes, 2002, p.700). In *The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairytales*, Jung (1970) claims that there is a spiritual dimension to the human psyche called the collective unconscious which manifests archetypes of the spirit in the form of archetypal images. He distinguishes the archetypal representations from spirit itself because, whilst the images may be varied in their structures, spirit is ultimately transcendent. Jung supports this assertion by describing the hallmarks of spirit as being: firstly, the principle of spontaneous movement and activity; secondly, the spontaneous capacity to produce images independently of a sense of perception; and thirdly, the autonomous sovereign manipulation of these images (Jung, 1970, p.90).

Jung identifies five images: the *Wise Old Man*; the *Magician*; the *Doctor*; the *Priest* and the *Teacher* or *Professor* as being the main archetypes of spirit. In the field of education, Mayes (2002) utilises Jung's archetypal theory to argue that some of the images which have emerged in the texts of teacher's narratives are variations on the Jungian idea of the teacher as an archetype of spirit. Based on his work, Mayes proposes a taxonomy which can be used to explore both the possibilities and problems inherent in different "spiritually-orientated" views of the teacher. Mayes's taxonomy has the following four categories:

- *discursive spirituality* (the teacher-as-philosopher)
- *civic spirituality* (the teacher-as-national-prophet)
- *ontological spirituality* (the teacher-as-Zen master/counsellor/ mother and
- *incarnational spirituality* (the teacher-as-priest)

The teacher-as-philosopher is the most tenuous archetype of spirit, according to Mayes, because it resides on the margins between rational and transrational domains. It pictures the teacher primarily in terms of a dialectical pedagogy, yielding propositional truth of a more or less syllogistic variety which conforms to the

“structure-of-the-discipline” theory of instruction (Mayes, 1999, 2002). An over-identification with this logos bound archetype suggests that the teacher has not sufficiently ventured out of the constrictive bounds of the syllogistic “mathetic” domain to discover the possibilities of the “poetic” domains, where the archetypes of spirit live, move and have their “being” (Mayes, 2002; Wilber, 1996).

The second archetype in the typology is what Mayes refers to as the “teacher-as-national-prophet”. This archetype offers an idealised political vision for the teacher, whose function becomes one of calling – or rather recalling – a people to “their noblest traditions and aspirations” (Mayes, 2002, p.706; Cremin, 1976, p.77). Spirit, as represented by this archetype, would move teachers and schools to rediscover their “civic spirituality” or foundational ideas, images and stories of traditions and culture. As with many archetypes, however, this one also has a “shadow” (Jung, 1963), what Mayes calls the teacher as shadow prophet (Mayes, 2002). Teachers who are possessed by this dark archetype generally speak from a smug sense of moral certainty. Their political pronouncements are somewhat left-of-centre, preferably leaning towards a humanistically rejuvenated type of Marxism. They show, on the whole, a presumptive bias against merit, wealth, individual achievement and liberty, because they think that these are capitalist, racist vices. They may also hold the belief that those who dissent from a doctrine of social justice and perfect equality should be cast out of the community and declared heretics (op cit, p.705). Teachers who draw from the power of the archetype of teacher-as-prophet therefore must always guard against their socially constructive sense of a political or civic commitment, turning into intolerance, self-righteousness and even fanaticism.

The third aspect of the teacher as archetype of spirit is identified as a complex of images consisting of mother, counsellor and caretaker. Exploring the multifaceted nature of this image, Mayes (2002, p.709) places it in the category of teacher-as-Zen master. Teaching in this sense becomes mysterious, because the teacher’s non-doing paradoxically brings a feeling of fulfilment unlike that in previous forms. Her “influence” has markedly decreased, yet in another way it is more refined, subtle, unself-conscious. Becoming totally student-centred, the teacher moves towards a certain egolessness. According to Mayes (2002, p.711), when the images of the counsellor and caretaker become “satellites” of the image of the Zen master, the

teacher archetype begins to move into the more intuitive, numinous atmosphere of spontaneous responsiveness to the psycho-spiritual needs of the other. Relationships become more important than rationality and empathetic understanding more important than abstract principles.

In sum, the archetypal complex of teacher as Zen master, counsellor and caretaker moves beyond the dialectical spirituality of the teacher-as-philosopher, as well as the civic spirituality of teacher-as-prophet, so that teacher and student (may) enter the transrational realm of intuition, presence and relational responsibility.

The teacher-as-priest is the fourth form of archetype in the typology. Mayes calls this incarnational spirituality, arguing that it differs from “ontological spirituality” because “incarnational spirituality” rests on specific doctrinal commitments whereas “ontological spirituality” is primarily interested in cultivating ontological presence and care (Mayes, 2002, p.713).

Like Mayes, various other authors from different faith-perspectives have explored such “images” of teachers and teaching. For example, Palmer (1983), speaking from ecumenical protestant commitments, argues that teachers must learn to take a view of knowledge that is very different from the so-called technical rationality that underlies so many curricular reform agendas:

*“... a knowledge that springs from love will implicate us in the web of life; it will wrap the knower and the known in companion, in a bond of awesome responsibility ... We must recover from our spiritual tradition the models and methods of knowing as an act of love.”*

Similarly, Gatto (1997) likens teaching to an apostolic vocation from a Jewish perspective; where Wexler (1996) illustrates how kabbalistic mysticism may offer a model of resacralising teacher and public education.

Caution about Jung’s “shadow” also applies to the archetype of the teacher-as-priest. Teachers who envision themselves in these terms must resist any evangelising tendency which would overtly, or covertly, bring discourse into the classroom along

the lines of their own religious allegiance whilst dismissing other legitimate religious commitments.

To conclude, whether such archetypal images have an ontological reality, or not, cannot be verified, as the inner consciousness, or subconscious, of individuals and collectives is never open to empirical inspection. However, Jung's work provides us with a compelling psychological perspective on the nature of spirit as a dimension of the human psyche which manifests itself in the form of archetypal images. I have discussed how the image of the teacher archetype is being currently utilised in the field of education with particular attention given to Mayes's taxonomy of four images of teacher that have emerged from the literature on teaching. These form a continuum ranging from a discursive spirituality (the teacher-as-philosopher) found on the margins between the spiritual and rational domains, through the domains of civic and ontological spirituality to the image of teacher-as-priest. It is this latter image of incarnational spirituality which, Mayes argues, comes closest to the centre of the Jungian archetype of the teacher-as-spirit.

### **COMMON USAGE CONCEPTIONS OF SPIRIT**

There are numerous occasions when the word "spirit" is naturally used in everyday talk, for instance, one could just as well say "he is glum" as "his *spirits* are low", or "the real intent of the law" as the "*spirit* of the law". When used in ordinary talk the term spirit seems to be essential to such expressions in order to convey a particular expectation, or intention, over and above other words that could be used in its place.

I have included this as a fourth standpoint on the nature of spirit to illustrate one of spirit's main characteristics and "mission" as a moving air metaphor (*pneuma*) or wind which blows where it will. As a means of illustration I will take two widely used expressions, "the spirit of fair play" and "I am with you in spirit" to illustrate the higher intentions that use of spirit brings to each expression.

The expression "the spirit of fair play" is invoked in human dealings of all kinds, including the political, legal and economic. The base from which its meaning is extended is "play" or sport (Smith, 1988). To act in the spirit of fair play is to be

sporting, that is to follow commonly understood rules (so as not to spoil the game constituted by the rules) and above all to give the antagonists an equal chance.

Whereas fairness is a rule of conduct, the “spirit of fair play” gives the expression a meaning which is more than the concept or code of fairness. Through the inclusion of spirit the rule is envisaged as applying to everyone, as something each person is expected to enter into. Smith (1988) suggests that one enters into the “spirit” in much the same way as one enters into a personal relationship. The difference is that a personal relationship exists, or ceases to exist, as one enters or leaves it, whereas spirit has its own independent reality. As such it is present to the individual as a possible way to act and an available kind of relationship with others.

To use the term spirit in the expression “the spirit of fair play”, therefore, is to recognise that there is a sphere of commonality that is to be shared with others who play fair. Such a commonality applies not only in terms of acts but also intentions; one means to fair play. To be in the spirit is to live fully in relationship with others for whom living in that fashion and under those circumstances is likewise essential.

The second illustration, the expression “I am with you in spirit”, is commonly used in a letter for example; in the consciousness of being unable to speak or act with another person at an envisioned moment, whilst acknowledging the possibility of projected non-bodily togetherness. Both the speaker and recipient of the gesture believe that the intention, although invisible, in some sense prevails over the physical separation. The intention is for *togetherness*, but the place where togetherness occurs is obviously not physical but an intentional place. To write or read the expression and to take it seriously is to become conscious of dwelling in that intentional place of spirit.

Whenever spirit is used in common expressions we can say that there is a commonality of intention which supervenes upon individual intentions without abolishing the individuality of person to each other (Smith, 1988, p.57). By its power to animate a diverse collection of people to come together on the basis of a common interest, spirit represents the intention that there will be a higher *unity* that is held in place relative to plurality.

## SPIRIT AS INTENTIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The fifth and final standpoint on the nature of spirit is taken from Daniel Helminiak's (1996) work which provides one example of spirit as an anthropological category. I have included Helminiak's work as an example of a perspective which is problematic and thus in need of critique. First, in his attempts to formulate a definition of spirit Helminiak shrinks spirit to the level of human intentional consciousness alone, without reference to a distinctive higher source of consciousness or higher reality than the human – a deviation which denies virtually the whole tradition about spirit. Second, based on this exclusively humanistic orientation, Helminiak presents an "absorption model" of the workings of spirit which is solely focused on the self's cognitive appropriation or "absorption" of the world., hence it cannot acknowledge the existence of the otherness of the other or the inviolability of such otherness (Baird, 2002, p.17). The implication of this deficiency will become evident in later discussions of spirit as a dimension of the pedagogical relation.

Helminiak argues that the words "spirit" and "consciousness" are synonymous and therefore interchangeable (Helminiak, 1996, p.44). The human spirit is thus human consciousness in both its *reflecting*, or intentional, and its *non-reflecting*, or non-intentional forms. As Helminiak (1996) explains:

*"Spirit is aware "of" itself as the aware object. Its self-possession is not its grasping itself as an object. Its self-possession is simply its being itself. Being itself, it is full aware "of" itself, unmediatedly present "to" itself, non-reflectively conscious. It is present "to" itself not by confrontation but by identity. It is present "to" itself by being itself, for to do so is its peculiar nature" (op cit, p.57).*

Given this non-reflective basis, spirit is an *absolute and dynamic openness* (Helminiak, 1996, p.66) towards all being that is able to absorb the specific contents of the world at the same time that it remains unencumbered by them and thus essentially content free (op cit, p.67). Spirit's openness is therefore both structured and intrinsically limitless. Since spirit's nature is continually to move, to reassess, to rework, until it attains its ultimate goal *the complete appropriation of reality* (op cit, p.68), its openness is structured by four cognitive steps – experience, understanding,

judgment and decision. To be inspired, according to Helminiak's perspective, is to execute these four cognitive functions authentically in a way that transcends mere egoic concern. This can be achieved through particular transcendental injunctions – specifically to be attentive to experience, intelligent in the act of understanding, reasonable in making judgements and responsible in making decisions.

The problem I have with Helminiak's relegation of spirit to a merely cognitive process is that nowhere in his perspective is the original divine animating breath, or wind principle, which is the essence of spirit, apparent. Such an omission disrespects what matters most in and about human life - the sense of a higher principle. Helminiak's perspective also represents a significant departure from the tradition of spirit where there had been a continuing attempt to relate the human psyche, mind or consciousness to something greater, even when the divine *pneuma* (wind) is replaced by other transcending realities (Smith, 1988, p.12).

In Greek philosophy for example, Empedocles's theme was cosmic love and Heraclitus preferred to discourse upon the *logos* (word or reason), according to which “all things are one” (Kirk et al, 1957, p.196). The Pythagoreans in Italy were so impressed by the measure and proportion discoverable in the world that they identified the reality of everything, including *psyche* with numbers. However, they also related the soul to the divine in ascribing to it an immortality and perpetual motion (op cit, p.404). Hippocrates's *pneuma* was considered to be a universal moving air that human beings imbibed through nose, mouth and pores. The soul was “the inner *pneuma*, continuously renewed by inspiration and exhalation, which lends the organism movement and life” (Wili, 1954, p.84).

In Athenian philosophy we find that the distinctive and higher sort of consciousness that Aristotle understood by the word *nous* was not merely a mental possession, but the function of some relationship with the divine, meaning a “higher” reality than the human (Smith, 1988, p.67). This transcendence is implied wherever it is claimed that the mind is responsive to meaning or principles. Plato understood the mental event to mean the cognition of a form to the Good which informed thoughts and its objects, and the capacity for this as a human kinship with the divine:



*“But we must fix our eyes, Glaucon, on [the soul’s] love of wisdom and note how she seeks to apprehend and hold converse with the divine, immortal and everlasting world to which she is akin, and what she would become if her affections were entirely set on following the impulse that would lift her out of the sea in which she has shrunk...”* (Republic, 611d-e).

In heeding this emphasis, argues Smith (1988, p.67), we would regard “mind” as the avenue by which conscious beings are possessed by something “beyond” rather than as the avenue by which the world is delivered over to consciousness simply to be possessed. Finally, in the writings of Herder, Schiller and Goethe we find the German spirit word *Geist* being used as an alpha-and-omega term referring to a higher unity of human being that comprehends creativity and the life-force as well as the rational faculty (op cit, p.26). However, it is Hegel who has been most influential in his articulation of *Geist*. He recognised three stages in spirit’s development; subjective: objective and absolute spirit. *Subjective spirit* takes in all the phenomena of the soul and consciousness as they are experienced and corresponds to a spiritual realm. *Objective spirit* comprises all the demands with which spirit confronts itself to produce an objective world adequate of spirit, where universal freedom is expressed in moral, religious and political form. Only *Absolute spirit* supersedes the remaining externality that separates individuals from themselves, from each other and from “God”. According to Hegel, spirit attains actuality as the *Absolute Idea* only through its synthesis of the subjective and objective aspects of its nature.

Helminiak’s conception of spirit is flawed. Cognitive rational decision-making is only one of the potentialities of spirit which manifests itself in consciousness. As history and traditions illustrate, no matter how determined rationalists have been in trying to reduce spirit to the logic of its propositional structure alone, it continuously calls attention to its own estrangement. Man is reminded that he is lonely, that he has lost a sense of “life” or a core of something which is important and worth striving for. The human self cannot be a self without relating itself to its Creator who has constituted it. Hegel said the same. For him, the dynamism of spirit is such that finite spirit cannot rest content until its finite form is grounded in its infinite form (Smith, 1998, p.30). In his *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, he also argues that spirit must court its oppositions,

conflicts, tensions and reputations rather than avoid or evade them. Competing interpretations cannot be swallowed up and lost in the Absolute Idea, but must all play their part in maintaining the life of spirit. Spirit wins its truth when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself (Taylor, 1986, p.27).

One further issue I have with Helminiak's perspective is that it leaves out of play other important non-rational factors that influence the working of cognitive assimilation. For example, if an individual cannot, or chooses not to, understand and make a sound judgement in relation to an *other*, or if the individual does not appropriate an *other* cognitively, either because of inability or prejudice, then how can that individual show moral or ethical responsibility towards others? Although I do not believe that Helminiak's understanding of spirit leads *inevitably* to potential neglect in relation to those different from oneself, I find his exclusive emphasis on the primacy of unconditional intentionality that absorbs the world to be problematic, particularly given its inability to acknowledge or respect the otherness of other.

### **CONSOLIDATED DEFINITION FOR SPIRIT AS A PERSONAL RESOURCE**

So far our discussion has centred on the nature of spirit as an essential part of what it means to be human, as an embodied source of life. We have also touched on different ways by which an individual may become aware of its presence as a personal resource which animates their actions in the world. A consolidated "shape" for spirit can now be suggested as follows:

*Spirit in its human expression is an animating principle, a divine breath or wind which is the source of life and constitutive of it. The idea of God forms a common thread and individuals can gain access to spirit through its different manifestations. In dealing with spirit as genius we found that it inspires awareness of certain foundational qualities such as the presence of a special talent or predisposition for invention and creativity. It is also possible to enter the realm of the psyche to explore how personal dreams and imaginings reveal archetypes of spirit that may shape individual attention and interest. When a collection of people meet with a common interest, it is the presence of spirit which brings the principle of unity and shared togetherness that holds the group together. Spirit may*

*also manifest itself in terms of a cognitive freedom or intentional consciousness because there are situations in every environment which require more rational and intentional action.*

It is important to note that the consolidated characterisation of spirit I have provided above is non exclusive. Other definitional boundaries have been provided by different commentators (Gelven, 1990; Smith, 1988; Best, 1996; Carr, 1995; 1996; Hand, 2003). Based as it is on a small number of standpoints, it is acknowledged that – whilst the characterisation does not offer a logical taxonomy or rules for its development (Hand 2003, p.392) – it nevertheless provides the reader with a practical working definition for the purposes of this study. The intention is to develop and extend this preliminary characterisation of spirit as we move on to explore some of its wider connections in the spiritual, religious, moral and relational aspects of the human condition.

#### **“SPIRIT” AND THE “SPIRITUAL”**

A direct connection can be made between the word “spirit” and the word “spiritual” in which “spirit” is a shared element. Gelven (1990) suggests that this sharing represents a shift from “spirit” as meaning a personal, or human, interest to “spiritual” as a concern for a greater reality beyond the human and the personal (op cit, p.19). In Christian spirituality this shift takes the form of actively re-establishing, or strengthening, a personal relationship with the divine source through prayer and devotion – and living the fruits of that relationship as it issues forth in the world.

Tillich (1968) provides another example of how the connection of “spirit” and the “spiritual” can be conceptualised. For Tillich “spiritual” describes a process in which the divine Spirit (*written with a capital S*), in the form of a Spiritual presence, works through the human spirit of an individual to create a new being. As a new being, the spiritually converted person is empowered to participate in the world to bring about a spiritual community. Such a process cannot proceed, however, until the life of an individual has become integrated or centred in the human spirit. It is through the human spirit that the impact of the Spiritual Presence is received through “inspiration” and “infusion”, both terms meaning metaphorically a breathing or pouring into the life of the human spirit.

The further link between spirit and the spiritual, stressing personhood, has been made by Macquarrie (1972). Macquarrie states that “fundamentally the spiritual has to do with becoming a person in the fullest sense” (op cit, p.40). Not only is it the capacity a person has for transcendence – being open to, and going beyond the ego state – but it also encompasses a range of diverse human activities through which persons may express their spiritual being. These include being open to self-criticism, creative endeavours, and taking responsibility for one’s actions; pursuing the quest for the good, forming a community and “whatever else belongs to the amazing richness of what we call “the life of the spirit” (op cit, p.40-41). What is in view here is that spirituality is a way of life which brings about a transformation of the person through actions which contribute to the growth of a unified spiritual centre.

Indeed, it is in its larger more transcendent connections in the spiritual that the concept of spirit has become implicated in the legislative framework affecting school education for England and Wales. It is my intention, in the sections which follow, to engage with the contours of the political development of the spiritual in educational policy making and also to provide a review of two of the main strands of the academic debate which have developed in response to policy directives.

#### **THE SPIRITUAL IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL LEGISLATION**

The 1944 Education Act refers explicitly to spirituality: “The statutory system of public education...contributes towards the spiritual, moral, developmental and physical development of the community” (DES, 1944).

However, although the Act asserted the importance of the spiritual in terms of the development of children, what this should mean in practice was not clearly developed, playing no significant role in educational debate until its re-emergence thirty years later. Chadwick (1997) claims that one reason why the spiritual was not considered to hold a central position in the purposes of education at that time was because of the involvement of the churches in the national system of education. Churches were expected to guarantee moral and social order through the inculcation of Christian values (op cit, p.5). Through the influence of the Church, there was an implicit consensus that schools would prepare pupils for their place within Christian society.

It was not until the contribution of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) to the Government's proposals for educational reform, outlined in the 1977 *Green paper for Education in Our Schools* (DES, 1977a), that the issue of the spiritual – and what this should mean in terms of the spiritual development of children – was placed firmly on the school agenda. The 1977 Green Paper advocated the establishment of a core curriculum, together with the formulation of a set of basic educational aims. In their discussion paper, *Curriculum 11-16* (DES/HMI, 1977b), HMI stated that spiritual education should be concerned with introducing pupils to certain essential areas of human knowledge and experience: the aesthetic and creative, ethical, linguistic, mathematical, physical, scientific, social, political and the spiritual. In a supplement responding to requests for further clarification, HMI went on to offer two contrasting definitions for the development of the spiritual dimension in schools. The first of these definitions provided an *anthropological* focus for spiritual development:

*“The spiritual area is concerned with the awareness a person has of those elements in existence and experience which may be defined in terms of inner feelings and beliefs; they affect the way people see themselves and throw light for them on the purpose and meaning of life itself. Often these feelings and beliefs lead people to claim to know God and glimpse the transcendent; sometimes they represent that striving and longing for perfection which characterises human beings, but always they are concerned with matters at the heart and root of existence”* (DES/HMI, 1977b).

Such a definition promotes the spiritual dimension as an area of human awareness and inner feeling, which opens the individual to an understanding of a transcendent reality when dealing with matters at the heart and root of existence. In this proposal, the spiritual dimension constitutes a body of knowledge and experience that pupils should be taught to investigate and understand.

The second definition of the spiritual dimension offered by HMI provides an explicitly *theological* focus:

*“The spiritual area is concerned with everything in human knowledge or experience that is connected with or derives from a sense of God or gods. Spirituality is a meaningless adjective for the atheist and of dubious use to the agnostic. Irrespective of personal belief or disbelief, an unaccountable number of people have believed and do believe in the spiritual aspects of human life, and therefore their actions, attitudes and interpretations have been influenced accordingly” (op cit).*

This second definition acknowledges that a tighter focus should be placed on human knowledge and spiritual experience, which is related to children having a sense of God.

By the time the 1988 Education Reform Act reached the statute books, the spiritual dimension of education was removed from the body of the curriculum and included within the basic statement of educational aims and purposes as a vision of the educational enterprise as a whole. The White Paper, *Choice and Diversity* (DfE, 1992), which followed the 1988 Reform Act, stressed the connection between spirituality and those shared values underpinning the ethos and activity of schools. In its 1993 publication, *Spiritual and Moral Development* (NCC, 1993), the National Curriculum Council confirmed the importance of the anthropological perspective provided by HMI in 1977. It understood spirituality as fundamental to the human condition, transcending ordinary everyday experience and concerned with the search for identity and meaning in response to death, suffering, beauty and evil. Spiritual development was seen in terms of eight aspects: the sense of awe, wonder and mystery; feelings of transcendence; the search for meaning and purpose; self knowledge; relationships; creativity; feelings and emotions. The promotion of spirituality required the nurturing of curiosity, imagination, insight and intuition through school ethos, collective worship and explicit curriculum. A further move in the development of policy consisted of the decision by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted, 1993) to monitor and evaluate the ways in which schools were responding to their legal obligations to develop the spiritual growth of their pupils and communities.

The implication of this review of educational legislation for my project is that the notion of the spiritual is no longer considered to be at the margins of educational concern, but is a dimension which should permeate the whole of children's educational experience. Indeed, the 1988 Education Reform Act served to open up a lively and wide-ranging academic debate about what the language of spirituality should include (e.g. Thatcher, 1990; 1996; Wright; 1998; 1999; Hay et al 1998; Nye et al 1996; Erricker 1998; Stern, 2001; Priestley, 1997). Two of the main lines of arguments fuelling this debate are now considered.

#### **DEFENCES FOR A THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN'S SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE**

In response to government policy, Thatcher (1990; 1996) advocated that a theological foundation should inform the spiritual education of children. He stated that a lack of theological direction over the years had seriously undermined religious education and that "one of the most important tasks for the theologian is to draw attention to this climate of unbelief" (Thatcher, 1990, p.274). Contemporary society, Thatcher claims, needs to recover the importance of religious truth (op cit, p.274) through a solid theological foundation for religious education. He takes the view that spirituality has always been located within the religious traditions; therefore it is a misuse of the word if it is not informed by a reflective understanding of the doctrinal systems of specific religious communities. Thatcher's stance is therefore a radical one which advocates an orthodox Trinitarian Christian foundation for the spiritual in education based on "the practice of human love of God and neighbour" (Thatcher, 1996, p.119). Although the extent to which Thatcher wishes to see Christian spirituality providing the basis of spiritual education in state schools is not clear, he does emphasize that it must at least form the foundation of a spiritual pedagogy in *Christian* educational institutions.

Wright (1998; 1999) adopts a similar theological position to that of Thatcher. In his work *Spiritual Pedagogy* (1998), he claims that there is a loss of faith in "ultimate spiritual truth (op cit, p.ix) resulting from the pursuit of rationalism and materialism in the Enlightenment. This gave rise to the Romantic idea of an individualistic spirituality based on the inner experiences of the individual, "dislocated from the wisdom of tradition and community" (op cit, p.1x). Such a "rootless romantic

spirituality”, Wright asserts, is what we now find in the guise of postmodernism. As a result, the postmodern child is “deprived of spiritual roots and the skills of spiritual discernment” (op cit, p.ix). Wright’s arguments support Thatcher’s concern for the truth claims of Trinitarian Christianity. Authentic faith, according to Wright, “is rooted in...a relationship with the Trinitarian God dependent on the mediation of revelation through scripture and ecclesiastical tradition” (op cit, p.72). What Wright wishes to achieve through his project is a “reconstruction of spiritual literacy”, whereby those traditions which assert the presence of divinity are theologically represented in the development of the spiritual dimension in schools (Wright, 1998, p.86).

Implicit in these two defences for a theological foundation to spiritual pedagogy is the argument that children should be led to a knowledge of God, particularly through engagement with the doctrines of the Christian tradition. The concern I have with this argument for my project is that it overly privileges faith and belief at the expense of the *I/thou*, *ethical* and *community relations*. This requires recourse to a philosophical analysis of the alternative ways that the idea of God can be conveyed through the spiritual: an issue I shall address in chapters 3 and 4.

#### **THE CHALLENGE OF AN EXPERIENTIAL BASIS FOR SPIRITUALITY**

A second strand to the debate on the meaning of the spiritual in the development of children’s spirituality has grown out of observing and understanding how children themselves talk about their experience and the role of the spiritual within it.

In their empirical study, *The Spirit of a Child*, Hay et al (1998) sought a way to address what they considered to be one of the main problems facing traditional European culture in terms of spiritual understanding. They argued that this aligned too closely the concepts of religion and spirituality, in some cases treating them as synonyms. As a result many adults tend to keep quiet about, or even repress, their spiritual awareness. In such circumstances, Hay et al argue, a good place to find awareness of the spiritual is amongst young children, before they have learned to be suspicious of religious beliefs.



The aim of their project was to encourage six and ten year old children to talk about their understanding of their spiritual experience, without introducing religious language, unless the children chose to themselves (Hay et al, 1998, p.59). The terms “spiritual” or spirituality were also not defined at any point during the research process. The research found that children displayed their spiritual awareness through three interrelated themes: “awareness sensing”; “awareness of mystery”; and “awareness of value”.

*Awareness-sensing* was found to be a form of “heightened awareness” (op cit, p.62) and included children’s ability to focus attention on the here-and-now; to tune into the ebb and flow of experience; and to focus on a “felt sense” or the bodily experience of events (op cit, p.65-66). *Mystery-sensing*, as a spiritual sensitivity, was found to be closely associated with the “notion of transcendence” (op cit, p.66). Hay et al describe this awareness in terms of children’s talk about their experiences of awe and wonder. Imagination and creativity were also found to be expressions, or forms, of mystery-sensing since Hay et al found that children tended to express their sense of wonder, or mystery, through creative and imaginative forms which provided a “window on this aspect of their spirituality” (op cit, p.70). Hay et al claim that the third sensitivity, *value-sensing*, is based on children’s “feelings about the things they valued” (op cit, p.70). Children tended to express their ideas of worth, or value, in terms of “their everyday experiences of delight or despair” (op cit, p.71). Children were also found to have a sense of “ultimate goodness” that allowed them to have a basic “trust in being” and an endless curiosity for meaning-making (op cit, p.72-73). Hay et al describe this aspect of children’s *value-sensing* as having both a cognitive and experiential aspect:

*“The search for the discovery of meaning may directly form an aspect of developing spirituality. In childhood, in particular, as a sense of identity is sought for, established and deepened, questions are raised which are essentially spiritual: Who am I? Where do I belong? What is my purpose? To whom or what am I connected or responsible? These apparently cognitive signs of spiritual activity are in many cases the secondary products of spiritual stirrings found in awareness-sensing and value sensing”* (Hay et al, 1998, p.74).

More importantly, based on an analysis of their conversations with children, Hay et al (1998) identify children's "relational consciousness" to be a precursor and central aspect of their spiritual experience. In sum, Hay et al's research is grounded in the notion of experience as the source of the spiritual. In this respect, they assume a different starting point from the doctrinally articulated position of the theological approaches. Their position is that children's spirituality is rooted in a universal human awareness, that is "really there" and not just "a culturally constructed illusion" (Hay et al, 1998, p.4). They acknowledge that "religion" and "spirituality" can be understood as related or distinct terms, and that this dichotomy has often created confusion about the sense and application of the latter term when it is stripped of its religious connotations. They accept that spiritual experience transcends religious and cultural boundaries and that "knowledge of religion and the ability to use religious language is not the whole story when thinking about the spiritual" (op cit, p.57). Hay et al are seeking to give status to the spiritual as that which transcends both language and religion; both of which they claim act as vehicles for its expression. The implications of this approach for the argument I am developing in this thesis are that it serves to widen the possibilities for dialogue about the spiritual in educational policy to include a focus on children's subjective and relational development.

### **"SPIRIT" AND THE "RELIGIOUS"**

By disarticulating the historic and sometimes commonsensical link made between "spirit" and "religion", it is possible to fend off concerns that the promotion of spirit through a distinctive pedagogy can only be undertaken by possessing a prior commitment to a religious faith of one kind or another. We are therefore in a position to reconsider alternative ways of conceptualising a connection between "spirit" and the "religious". But first we must say what religion is in this new framework.

Formal definitions of religion can be roughly divided into those which seek to portray it as a collective term (consisting of different categories of experience) – and those which separate its institutionalised form from an account of the "religious". Examples of definitions in the former category include contributions from William James (1961) and Rudolph Otto (1923).

William James develops his definition from his classic work *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1982):

*“Religion therefore, as I now ask you arbitrarily to take it, shall mean for us the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider divine”* (op cit, p.31).

James’s definition of religion emphasises the solitariness of the individual and the open-endedness and non-committal stance of the phrase “whatever they may consider...” Rudolf Otto’s (1950) definition of religion, in contrast, favours a focusing upon a specific referent in religious experience, which he calls *The Holy*. According to Otto:

*“Religion is that which grows out of, and gives expression to, experience of the holy in its various aspects”* (op cit, p.4).

An awareness of *the holy* in this definition is a collective name used to describe both the “rational” acts and “non-rational” (religious or numinous) aspects of religion (Otto, 1950, p.1). Otto’s study had a deep influence on the work of Mircea Eliade, providing the basis for his distinction between the sacred and the profane, between immanent and transcendent responses to the mystery of life. In archaic pre-modern societies, Eliade argues, human beings were essentially *homo religiosus*, striving to live as far as possible in the realm of the sacred. “Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, shows itself, as something wholly different from the profane” (Eliade, 1987, p.11). He describes “hierophany” as the act of manifestation of the sacred, the means through which the sacred reveals itself to humanity, and views the history of religions as the history of such hierophanies. For both Otto and Eliade such religious experience is rooted in a reality beyond the natural world, in the numinous.

In modern times, however, as religion has become increasingly institutionalised, with rigidly determined doctrinal prescriptions handed down from generation to generation, other commentators have sought to separate this trend from the meaning

of “religious”. Martin Buber has made one such attempt to foster this differentiation (Vermes, 1977; Moore, 1974). Buber characterises the spirit of religion as “religiosity”, which describes the human “urge to establish a living communion with the unconditional” (meaning God or the eternal Thou) (Buber, 1967, p.93). Religiosity therefore is not just about how one worships God, but about the *relation* or *dialogue* that is fostered between the individual and God as the eternal Thou in the created world. Buber considered this communion to be the only way to inspire the constant renewal of religion necessary to maintain the bond between spirit and the world in every generation.

In the *Questions to the Single One* (1961) he writes:

*“Religion’s concern is not with God but with man’s intercourse with God since that is not only conducted in the world but is about the world, the purpose of organised religion should be the sanctification of that dialogue, not in a building set aside for it, and not by way of liturgical formulas, but in what is done in house, office, factory and field”* (op cit, p.79-80).

In contrast, Buber uses the phrase “prime peril” to describe what modern religion has become:

*“Indeed the utmost of man’s perils and temptations, that something of the human side of the intercourse becomes separate and independent, rounds itself off, becomes seemingly complete and reciprocal, and sets itself up in place of the true intercourse. Mans prime peril is religion”* (Vermes, 1977, p.73).

In taking this stand Buber does not mean to imply that the man of religion is *de facto* excluded from leading a religious life. On the contrary, he saluted those who are able to fall in with inherited beliefs and customs and still maintain a direct relation with God. His disagreement is with people who subscribe to the formalities of a religion whilst robbing God of his “mouth” in the present time (op cit, p.72). When religion for such people becomes reclusive, a refuge to which they retire in order to enjoy the

pleasures of egocentric communion, they become involved in, what Buber refers to as a “betrayal of the spirit and its transformation to meet the future” (Cohen, 1983, p.118).

On this point, Buber’s differences with Hegel and Kierkegaard are especially marked. Hegel’s thesis is that Spirit (the Absolute or intelligence of the universe: i.e. God) makes use of all that is and occurs in nature and history, including man in order to realise and attain consummate self consciousness. Buber argues that Hegel’s Absolute or God is hardly one which appears to men in their moments of despair and wonder. In his religious philosophy, Buber reinterprets history as a dialogue between the creator and mankind wherein man is an active partner in the work of redeeming the world (op cit, p.115).

In taking Kierkegaard also to task, Buber disagrees with his thinking that God is man’s sole relation or the relation that gives rise to all other relations. Buber charges Kierkegaard with wrongly viewing the relation of the individual – the “Single One” – wholly from the perspective of profound inward solitude in which a person’s relationship with his fellow man and the world has no place. God’s voice comes to a person existing as someone solitary and singular, so that man stands alone in God’s presence. Taking issue, Buber says that the individual sustains God’s image through saying “*Thou*” with his whole being to fellow beings living in his presence (Cohen, 1983, p.120). In this way, a relation with God can be realised which does not belong to another mode of existence but emanates from life and our world.

If, as Buber suggests, present day institutionalised religion is “unreal”, an affair of the divided spirit and a bar to genuine relation between God and man, and between man and God, what does he suggest that religion should do? In the *Eclipse of God* (1952) he writes that if institutionalised religion desires to become real it will work for its own obliteration:

*“From being a speciality concerned with God, it will aim to be transmuted into life itself. From being a preoccupation with specific religious activities, it will seek redemption from the specific, wishing God so to enter into the whole of man’s business on earth that all of it will become sacrament, all of it temple, all of it priesthood. Confessing itself to be*

*God's exile, religion will work for his kingdom not beyond the grave, but in the here and now, in human life "lived without arbitrariness before the Face of God" (Buber, 1952, p.48).*

To summarise: Buber considered the life of the spirit to be threatened rather than fostered by adherence to a particular religion. This is because the source of spirit is rooted in a creative principle which Buber calls religiosity. He defines religiosity relationally, as an interpersonal dialogue between an individual and God which emanates from the concrete circumstances of human existence. Religious dogma seems to Buber to be repressive of this dialogue. He particularly blames the churches whose adherence to abstract religious theories he considers to be responsible for the depersonalisation of religious meaning and for the consequent delusion with which religion is regarded by the young. Buber spoke optimistically, nonetheless, of the possibilities of achieving a renewal of the religious spirit – especially amongst the young and in this he foresaw an important role for teachers in bringing this renewal to fulfilment. Youth, Buber argues, is the time when the spirit of wonder and creative questioning are at their most potent and these are essential conditions for the growth of religiosity (Murphy, 1988, p.124).

For the religious teacher, the crucial question is how the spirit of religiosity can be nurtured in the young. Buber says that since man's access to the *eternal Thou* is by way of a relational existence, it follows that the religious teacher can foster the spirit of genuine religiosity through his everyday relationships with pupils (op cit, p.126). Rejecting the notion of religious teaching merely for the transmission of abstract knowledge, Buber identifies certain fundamental learning processes that the religious teacher should cultivate. He argues, firstly, for a fostering of the questioning spirit amongst the young, and a spirit of openness which is founded on young people's capacity for wonder, as manifested in their imaginative vitality and youthful outlook on life. Buber also regarded the prejudices which young people bring with them to the classroom as being additional resources which teachers should use to help their pupils to move towards a personal clarification of their religious understanding and experience (Murphy, 1988, p.126-7).

## **“SPIRIT AND THE “MORAL”**

In order to make the case for a connection between “spirit” and what we can understand by the term “moral”, I will draw on Paul Tillich’s theorisation of the distinction between the absolute and relative elements in moral consciousness and decision making.

According to Tillich (1969, p.92), when moral consciousness develops under the dimension of spirit it contains an in-built moral imperative which consists of two sides. On one side is an unconditional moral command, an absolute which commands that each person should be treated as a person and not as a thing or a means to an end (op cit, p.93). This aspect of moral consciousness, Tillich claims, is what gives people a sense of dignity in their encounters with other persons.

The other side of the moral imperative consists of what Tillich refers to as “the relativity of moral contents”. This is the side of moral consciousness which changes in order to respond to every situation in which a moral choice or a decision is required. There is no system of moral laws, Tillich claims, which is capable of meeting the relativities of every concrete situation and this is particularly the case in situations where a conflict is presented, whether this be a conflict of duties or of conscience. Tillich further argues that:

*“[There] is no excuse of outer authorities [that] can free us from the burden of decision in the relativities of our human situation. If we hand over to an outside authority, secular or religious, this painful freedom given to us as persons, we diminish the burden of having to decide but we also diminish our dignity” (op cit, p.101).*

In his search for guiding principles for moral decision making, Tillich recommends that a person starts with the absolute or unconditional imperative, that is acknowledging every person as a person who should not be violated. To do this requires love in its character as *agape* and what Tillich calls *listening love* (op cit, p.108-9). In its character of *agape*, love, according to Tillich has:

*“...the basic principles of justice within itself. If people deny justice to others but say that they love them, they miss the completely the meaning of agape. Agape must not be confused with other qualities of love: libido, friendship, compassion, pity, eros. Certainly agape is related to and can be combined with all of them, but it also judges all of them. It's greatness is that it accepts and tolerates the other even if he is unacceptable to us and we can barely tolerate him...In spite of this, he is not only acknowledged as a person; he is united with me in something that is above him and me, the ultimate ground of being of each of us” (op cit, p.109).*

Whilst identifying *agape* as the absolute moral principle, the “star” above the chaos of relativism, Tillich also sees the need for another guiding “star” one which provides a way in which *agape* love can be actualised in concrete situations. He refers to this guiding star as *listening love*:

*“Listening love” is a listening to and looking at the concrete situation in all its concreteness, which includes the deepest motives of the other person. Today we can understand the inner situation of another person better than people could in earlier periods. We have the help of psychological and sociological insights into the internal as well as the external conditions of an individual's predicament. These can be of aid to agape in its listening to and looking at the concrete situation” (op cit, p.109).*

Tillich also acknowledges a place for the *wisdom* contained in moral laws in the practice of *listening love*, but he does so insofar as it is recognised that they may prove inadequate for particular situations. He concludes his analysis by reminding us of the transformative possibilities that may emerge when these principles are put into effect:

*“In making such decisions courageously, guided by the principle of agape, looking with listening love into the concrete situation, helped by the wisdom of the ages, they do something not only for themselves and for those in relation to whom they decide. They actualise possibilities of*



*spiritual life which had remained hidden until then; therefore they participate creatively in shaping the future of ethical consciousness” (op cit, p.111).*

My purpose in this section has been to illuminate the source of spirit in moral consciousness and decision making through a discussion of Paul Tillich’s treatment of the absolute and relative character of the moral imperative. Tillich points to the absolute element as that which confers on individuals their sense of dignity as persons. It is unconditional in character and originates from a divine or holy aspect of a person’s true essential being. The absolute demand is that each person is treated as a person and not merely as a thing or a means to an end.

The source of the other side of the moral imperative is a moral consciousness capable of making choices in moral decision making. Tillich identifies *agape love* and *listening love* as the two moral principles capable of uniting the absolute and relative in acts of moral decision making. *Agape love* enables one person to acknowledge the reciprocity of another as a person through an understanding of the sacred unity which exists in the true essential being of all persons. On the other hand, *listening love*, moves a person to listen to and look at a concrete moral situation in all its different aspects, including taking account of what might be the internal and external conditions of a person’s predicament. When moral decision making is guided by the principles of *agape* and *listening love*, the moral imperative becomes a means of actualising the possibilities of spirit or a spiritual life capable of shaping the future of ethical consciousness.

In sum, spirit inspires a moral consciousness which can be experienced in two ways, as unconditional or as a freedom to make moral choices. This two-foldedness brings a depth into the moral experience and provides an opportunity for dialogue between absolute and moral principles. Although Tillich provides no pedagogical detail for the practical application of his understanding of moral consciousness, his interpretation of the moral spirit suggests that it is dialogic in nature.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter several standpoints on the nature of spirit have been discussed, leading to a consolidated characterisation of its potential primarily as a personal resource. This was followed by an exploration of spirit's wider connections, specifically in the spiritual, religious and the moral – with a view to identifying their foundational importance for pedagogy. On the basis of this analysis three main things were achieved. First, it has enabled us to distinguish different manifestations and qualities of spirit which can be accessed as personal resources. These include access to special talents, a predisposition for invention and creativity, access to different archetypes of spirit and the capacity for cognitive freedom which inspires intentional action in service of the good. It was also noted that the idea of God forms a common thread throughout the whole tradition of spirit. A third outcome is the implication for pedagogy of its wider connections in the spiritual, religious and the moral. We found that in terms of its connections in the spiritual, spirit brings a concern for a greater reality beyond the personal. This may take the form of strengthening ones relationship with the divine source, or it may take the form of a conversion which empowers participation in the world to bring about a spiritual community.

Spirit's connection with religion brings an attitude of religiosity which, I suggested, is different from the conventions of ritualised religion. Rather, it is a concern to foster a dialogue with God which emanates from the concrete circumstances of human existence. Among the learning processes which were suggested for bringing this about in the young, I noted a fostering of the questioning spirit, encouraging openness which is founded on young people's capacity to wonder and moving pupils towards the personal clarification of their religious understanding.

Finally we explored spirit's connection in the moral domain which inspires the possibility of making two kinds of moral responses, an unconditional moral response consisting of love (agape) for another as a person and the ability to make moral choices in order to respond to the relativities of new situations.

My intention in the next chapter is to consider the second theme of this study, the pedagogical relationship. In particular the role of tradition in shaping meanings such

as the religious, moral and the personal which give a level of significance to this aspect of a teacher's work.

## CHAPTER 2

### IMPORTANCE OF THE PEDAGOGICAL RELATION

At the heart of the practice of education lies the relationship between teacher and learner. It is in the enactment of this relationship that education succeeds or fails (Bonnett, 1996 p.28). There are few people who have not come across teachers whose presence and teaching enabled them to experience a real sense of growth in their understanding of a subject discipline. Many people feel indebted to such a teacher for the rest of their lives, even though the material they learned may have lost its significance. The importance of the pedagogical relation in this sense is that a student's life finds fulfilment and meaning through his relationship with a specific teacher.

My intention in this chapter is to discuss some of the traditional influences and meanings responsible for shaping the idea of the pedagogical relationship as a distinct and important aspect of pedagogical practice. The chapter concludes that a renewed vocabulary of spirit which both expands and enriches traditional meanings is not only necessary but vital for moving tradition forward.

In his article *What it means to Teach*, Hawkins (1973) describes the pedagogical relationship as central for the transmission and evolution of culture. He writes:

*"I should like to begin by observing that the teacher-learner relationship is at least as old as our human species, and that its formal institutional framework, though much more recent in origin, is only a stylised and often stilted version of something which goes on all the time among us, especially between older and younger. I want to underline the antiquity of this honourable relationship if only to remind you of the obvious, that it is a key link in the chain of human history and culture, and that without it we would perish immediately" (op cit, p.8).*

What Hawkins is drawing our attention to here is that the pedagogical relationship as a culturally determined practice is much older than its formal development in schools. However, whilst being a practice distinct from, and not confined to, the formal institutions in which it is carried out (MacIntyre, 1984), it has nevertheless been

subject to different social and political constructions as school systems have historically evolved. This sense of the pedagogical relationship as having a tradition makes it possible to learn from past efforts when informing and addressing current issues. As Dunne (2001, p.14) reminds us:

*“For despite our so easily supposing that we inhabit a securely “circumscribed present” from the vantage point of which we can objectify the “past” as other, this past – in the form of “prejudices” that we cannot avoid and can scarcely recognise – is already active within the (ostensibly impartial) thinking that we bring to an “object”. Our attempts to profile the past, then, always involve us in re-identifying ourselves...”* (op cit, p.14).

In order to develop a conceptualisation of the nature of the role played by tradition in education, and how it has shaped an horizon from which we can learn from past prejudices, I have selected three representations in the moral, the pastoral and the personal. I will begin below with a brief review of different theoretical perspectives on the notion of tradition itself in order to clarify some of its meanings. This is followed by an overview of some of the distinctive features which characterise the three dimensions of tradition, together with some of the questions and aspirations they raise for reshaping and transforming past efforts in the light of cultural changes and developments.

## **TRADITIONAL INFLUENCES**

There is considerable ambiguity surrounding the notion of tradition. Indeed, as Halpin, et al (1997, p.4) observe, apart from a few exceptions it has received little systematic attention in the literature. Tradition is a slippery concept and it is not easy to find a neat description which satisfies all. A basic definition of tradition suggests that it is anything which is transmitted or handed down from past to present. Shils (1981), for example, says that:

*“Tradition means many things. In its barest form most elementary sense it means simply “traditum”, it is anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present”* (op cit, p.12).

Such an elementary and passive sense of the notion of tradition makes no statement about what is handed down or in what particular combination, or whether it is a physical or a cultural construction, suggesting that different traditions, like different communities can develop variously.

To this basic definition, Hobsbawn (1983) contributes the concept of an “invented tradition”. In this view, traditions, whether they are relatively recent in origin or of long standing, are often invented for social or political purposes in order to establish continuity with a suitable historic past in response to a novel situation (Hobsbawn & Ranger, 1983). Invented traditions also tend to be based on “myth”, a notion which can be used in two basic and distinct senses. On the one hand, a myth can represent ideas which are “manifestations” of certain prominent individuals’ or group interests. On the other, it can evoke an overarching purpose or aim that, irrespective of its relation to truth or reality, it helps to sustain a mission, image, or particular systems of thought. Such an approach requires an understanding of tradition as meaning social constructs which are invented for the purposes of responding to specific social and political events and challenges, rather than gradually evolving or accumulating over time.

In addition to traditions as inventions, MacIntyre (1985) introduces the concept of a “living tradition”. A living tradition, he argues, is one which undergoes more or less constant modification and adjustments. Since no tradition of practice exists in a social or historical vacuum, its practitioners are subjected to any number of broad social and cultural influences. A living tradition is one which can respond to such influences through the agency of its practitioners: what they believe, how they conduct themselves and what they bequeath to those who come after them. In a living tradition, according to MacIntyre, practitioners do not simply sail with the prevailing wind. Instead, they chart a course that guides them towards the highest possibilities embedded in their practice. They cannot chart a course from nowhere. They need a narrative. A living tradition possesses strength not because it is beyond reasoned critique or conflict, but because it continues “a not-yet-completed narrative” (op cit p.221).

Giddens (1994) further observes that the integrity of tradition derives not so much from the fact of persistence over time, but from the continuous work of interpretation that is carried out to identify the strands which bind the present to the past. The work of interpretation, according to Gadamer (1962), requires attention to the legacies of tradition, it is about speaking to them and regarding them as a source of critique which can be re-shaped in order to create or bring into being new understanding.

## **THE MORAL DIMENSION OF TRADITION**

Traditionally, the moral dimension of the pedagogical relationship was thought to be grounded in the inherent inequality of the relationship which placed the teacher in a dominant position. This position of “dominance” is captured by Hawkins (1973) when he writes:

*“The [teacher/ learner] relationship, by its very nature, involves an offer of control by one individual over the functioning of another, who in accepting this offer, is tacitly assured that control will not be exploitative, but will be used to enhance the competence and extend the independence of the one controlled, and in due course will be seen to do so” (1973, p.8-9).*

A moral relationship, as understood in its traditional sense, therefore entails the teacher assuming the *authority* necessary for developing students in desirable directions, that is enhancing competence and extending independence. By accepting this obligation to foster these desirable outcomes, the teacher assumed moral responsibility for the student.

In order to ensure that issues of legitimate moral authority did not become reduced to displays of power and coercive behaviour, educational philosophers sought to make clear distinctions between authority and power. For example, Richard Peters (1966) in *Ethics and Education* distinguishes authority from power in one respect, that it is willingly and without coercion accepted by those under it. Acknowledgement of legitimacy is a feature of the concept of authority which distinguishes it from power (op cit, p.239). Its chief source of legitimation is upwards, from below, for when legitimation is purely a top down process, there is a danger that *authority* will become

*authoritarian* and in this sense become virtually indistinguishable from power. Peters further drew attention to the conceptual distinctions that can be applied within the notion of authority in the educational relationship. A teacher may be said to have authority in two distinct senses: as a person *in* authority and as a person being *an* authority. Peters defines these two corresponding types of authority as authority in the sphere of social control (*in authority*) and authority in the sphere of social knowledge (*an authority*).

Authority in the sphere of social control is also known as *practical* authority which is needed to maintain a sufficiently high degree of order and obedience, in particular by reinforcing a framework of rules. A person who is appointed to be *an* authority (also referred to as *theoretical* authority), is expected to exercise authority in a sphere of knowledge e.g. subject discipline or way of looking at the world. Authority in the sphere of knowledge also implies having a right to be believed (Peters, 1959, p.18; Steuter & Speicker, 2000, p.326). Such a right suggests the acceptance or endorsement of one's views or beliefs by others.

There is one other usage of authority to which Peters (1966, p.245-6) has drawn attention, and that is *charismatic authority*. In his discussion of the concept of *charisma* Peters conflates two distinct notions of authority under this concept, one of which is having special claims to knowledge (*an authority*) the other that of outstanding personal qualities, including, some kind of personal magnetism. In these different exemplifications of authority there is always a supposed or intentional end related to the implicit and explicit end of the exercise of authority. The ultimate test of authority, therefore, is who decides what the distinction of authority will be. In the moral dimension of tradition, according to Tom (1984), this was considered to be the teacher's province.

In his book *Teaching as a Moral Craft*, Tom (1984) examines three conceptualisations of ways in which teachers can assume moral authority over the development of pupils. Although these conceptualisations are ideal types, they nevertheless contain a common core of vocabulary needed to address systematically the question of moral authority in the relationship between teacher and student (op cit, p.83). The three conceptualisations are outlined below.



## **INSTRUCTING THE YOUNG ABOUT SOCIETY AND ITS TRADITIONS**

The first of these conceptualisations was proposed by American theorist Hannah Arendt (1968). Arendt's concern was with the state of crisis she found in American education and schools which resulted partly, from progressive educational ideals and partly from a commitment to the idea of equality. She found the concept of equality particularly troublesome because it encouraged teachers to erase as far as possible the differences between young and old, gifted and ungifted students, and students and teachers. Such equalisation could only be "accomplished at the cost of the teacher's *practical authority* (op cit, p.180). At the same time, Arendt was concerned that too much emphasis was being placed on "a child's world and a society formed among children that are autonomous, while in reality, childhood is a temporary stage for a human being who is in preparation for adulthood" (op cit, p.184). On the way to adulthood the child should learn about society and its traditions, a task Arendt allocated to schools. The teacher is the representative of this world and must assume responsibility for it, even though she did not make it and may wish that it were different. Assuming responsibility for the world and for introducing the child to it is, according to Arendt, an expression of the teacher's authority, which the child cannot throw off as if he were part of an oppressed minority. Unfortunately, claims Arendt "authority has been discarded by the adults, and this can mean only one thing: that the adults refuse to assume responsibility for the world into which they have brought the children" (op cit, p.190).

Arendt asserts, therefore, that "proper" pedagogical relations can only occur when teachers accept their responsibility for instructing the young about society and its past and the moral authority involved in the teacher's acceptance of this responsibility is honoured by the student. "To avoid misunderstanding", notes Arendt, "it seems to me that conservatism, in the sense of conservation, is of the essence for the educational activity" (p.192). In short, the teacher's task in this relationship is to interpret society's past traditions and current realities to the young; the student's task is to master these learnings. The relationship between teacher and student ought to be one-sided, with full responsibility residing in the teacher, at least until the student achieves adult status.

## **BUILDING A PROGRESSIVE AND HUMANE FUTURE**

A second conceptualisation of how teachers may exercise their moral authority has been proposed by Herbert Kohl (1976). Whilst concurring with Arendt that the teacher is deeply involved in taking responsibility for the development of the student, Kohl's focus is on building a progressive future rather than instilling respect for the past. "Teaching", he notes, "has to do with the future, with what we encourage our young people to become, and ultimately, of course, with what we will become as a nation and as a people who share the earth" (1976, p.12). The teacher is not neutral about the desired characteristics of future culture but rather ought to be involved in "remaking culture and society in humane and just ways" (p.100). While Kohl's definition of the teacher's role involves the teacher attempting to influence the students towards certain values, he believed that students were the moral equals of the teacher:

*"Moral equality can be threatening to adults, for it implies that the same rules apply to you as to your students. You cannot hurt or bully them, destroy their work, interfere with them when they are working. If you give them the opportunity, your students will let you know when you are making their lives intolerable or uncomfortable. You have to learn how to listen to these criticisms and, if they are well-founded, change your own behaviour" (1976, p.84).*

Unlike Arendt, Kohl saw clear limits to the teacher's authority over students. His conception of the pedagogical relationship also recognised the moral rights of students, and for a number of reasons. First, he argues, even though openness, love, and closeness are interpersonal virtues which facilitate a productive relationship between teacher and student, there are ways in which these virtues can be abused. For example, love of some students more than others can lead to favouritism, or excessive intimacy can lead the teacher to make herself the curriculum. Similarly, the teacher who attempts to politicise her students while committing students to humane and just values, may become overly dogmatic and be ignored by students. "We have to become tough with ourselves and realise that teaching in an open setting does not give us license to play out our fantasies or fulfil all our needs through the lives of young

people. Our job as teachers should be to turn our students on to themselves, to each other, and to all things that there is to learn about the world” (p.105).

The third conceptualisation of the pedagogical relationship which illustrates a way in which the teacher can assume moral responsibility is proposed by Paulo Freire (1970). Freire places the moral relationship in another perspective by declaring that during “real” teaching – what he terms problem-posing teaching – the entire question of teacher authority becomes irrelevant. The traditional relationship in which the teacher tells and the student listens is grounded in what Freire refers to as the “banking” concept of education where the authority of “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (op cit, p.58). The student’s role is nothing more than to receive, file and store the deposits from the teacher-banker.

As long as teachers operate from a banking concept of education, according to Freire, the world and its established social and political relationships, including its inequities, are considered to be givens. The more the student works at passively depositing ideas provided by the teacher the more the student adapts to the world as it is. The teacher who desires to liberate students from their naïve acceptance of oppression cannot do so by telling them of the nature of their oppression. Even employing revolutionary slogans, for example, is to use the banking concept of education, which is inconsistent with true liberation because one set of “givens” is merely replaced with another. Revolutionary banking is no better than status quo banking.

The teacher committed to authentic liberation attempts, through question posing, to encourage students to see their apparently natural cultural context as problematic. It is the dialogue that is initiated by problem posing, argues Freire, which has the strength to eventually redefine the moral relationship sufficiently for the teacher and students to become critical co-investigators in learning:

*“The teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teacher. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn, while being taught also teaches. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all will*

grow. In this process, arguments based on “authority” are no longer valid” (Freire, 1970, p.67).

Rather than viewing subject matter as his “private property”, the teacher should see it as “the objective of reflection by himself and the students.” No longer passive listeners, students become “critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher”, and the teacher both “presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers his earlier considerations as the students express their own” (op cit, p.68). To symbolise the growing identity of teacher and student when a particular subject matter is explored through problem-posing teaching, Freire uses the term *teacher-student* and *student-teacher*. As a result, Freire comes very close to rejecting the status of the teacher as being the sole source of *theoretical authority* in the relationship.

It is interesting to observe how the different perspectives discussed above, draw our attention to different views regarding the level of dominance that *practical* and *theoretical* authority should play in the development of the moral relationship. One reason for the variation in perspectives between Arendt, Kohl and Freire has been attributed to the different ages of the students on which each author focuses (Tom, 1984, p.86). For example, Freire’s ideas grew out of work with adults who were coping with issues of illiteracy, while Kohl’s experience grew out of teaching students in the primary and secondary phases of education. Similarly, Arendt appears to assume her perspective to be applicable for student mainly in elementary and secondary schools. Clearly these discussions suggest that arguments which are used to justify ideals of moral authority in the pedagogical relationship should also consider the interrelationship of age for the kind of moral authority being developed.

To summarise, in this section I have reviewed the moral tradition of the pedagogical relationship as it has been conceptualised and understood in the past. I have argued that the morality of this relationship is based on the trust invested in the culturally conceived dominance of the teacher by nature of the teacher being *in authority* (having practical authority) and being *an authority* (having theoretical authority). Traditionally, therefore, the moral focus has been on the extent to which teachers

should exercise these two distinct types of authority when forming relationships with pupils and secondarily with parents.

### **THE PASTORAL DIMENSION OF TRADITION**

A second representation of the pedagogical relationship is the pastoral dimension. Etymologically the term “pastoral” is inextricably linked to the word “pastor” and the root word from which pastor is derived is the verb “pascere”, to feed (Dooley, 1978). The word pastoral therefore has clear religious origins, signifying a religious or spiritual relationship based on the notion of the good shepherd or *pastor bonus* and his “flock”. Dooley describes the New Testament concept of the Good Shepherd as:

*“...one who tends the sheep, who checks that they don’t stray, who recognises each one and who in turn is recognised and acknowledged as the pastor. Within this idea what figures foremost is the utter concern that the pastor has for every single member. Much is made of the lost sheep and the rejoicing when it is finally restored by the shepherd to the flock. The whole idea of this concern is in the fact that it is used as a metaphor and allegory to illustrate an important point of Christian teaching”*  
(Dooley, p.182).

Having traced the concept of the pastoral back to its etymological roots, it is important to examine two further directions concerning its development. The first requires enquiring into how the original understanding of the pastoral, as invested in a form of religious care, eventually became transformed into paternalistic power by the state and its institutions. The second requires an exploration into some of the consequences of this line of development for the demise of the religious dimension particularly in institutionalised forms of pastoral care currently being practiced in schools.

In terms of the former direction, I draw on Follet’s (1986) discussion of Foucault’s (1982) analysis of how pastoral power became transformed via the educational system into the individualised power of the more secular paternalistic state. Foucault (1980, 1982) identifies two forms of power which he contends have existed since the sixteenth century. The older form of power, which originated in Christian

institutions, he called “pastoral power”. Foucault argues that Christianity brought into being a code of ethic that certain individuals can, by their religious quality, serve others as “pastors” (Foucault, 1982, p.214). The term of “pastor” designated a very special form of power, its ultimate aim being to assure individual salvation in the next world. More importantly, it was a form of power which focused on looking after not just the whole community, but also each individual within it during their lifetime. This could not be achieved without knowing the inside of people’s minds, or exploring their souls.

Foucault further claims that the religiously instituted form of pastoral power has lost its validity since the eighteenth century. This has occurred as its function has spread outside religious institutions, into state agencies and institutions. Thus the pastoral power, which had for many centuries been linked to a defined individual, the pastor, became incorporated into whole “social bodies”. In the process, a third form of power emerged which Foucault refers to as *disciplinary power*, with schools becoming one of the state’s most effective agents of this kind of power. On the basis of this change the role of the teacher came to be legitimised through the term *in loco parentis*, a term which Shaw (1977) argues:

*“...imparts a surplus air of legitimacy to some adult agency, in a struggle to establish and maintain power and authority, usually over the child, but quite often over the natural parent substitute” (op cit, p.181).*

In the context of the pedagogical relationship, the term *in loco parentis* became concerned with the notion of teacher’s being and acting as careful parents. Shaw argues that such a shift in our understanding of the pedagogical relationship signalled the gradual encroachment of school and state authorities on the powers, role and authority of parents and concludes that as it is currently being used, the notion of *in loco parentis* is highly ideological. Indeed Shaw claims that many of the apparent parental rights (e.g. to have their children educated) were invented by the state at the point when it began a new programme of social control through mass compulsory education (op cit, p.188-9).

Although the term *in loco parentis* has been, to a certain extent, modified, it has emerged as an important aspect of the contemporary notion of pastoral care in British secondary education in addition to representing an increasing encroachment of the state, as Follet (1986) observes:

*“The parental role was transformed into the legitimacy of the school authority through the term “in loco parentis” via the original notion of the state. This notion of paternalism itself became embedded in the role of the good school teacher and has been used as a strategy of social and cultural domination and transformation” (Follet, 1986, p.9).*

In this section, I have traced the etymology of the concept of “pastoral” back to its religious roots as the power invested in the role of the “pastor” in caring for the members of his flock. Foucault’s arguments have been used to illustrate how, since the eighteenth century, pastoral power became incorporated into the political power of the modern state and transformed into forms of disciplinary power in state run institutions including schools.

The idea of the “pastoral” as a paternalistic perception developed in its early stages as a civilising mission of elite groups in British society who made use of the concept to penetrate and “civilise” the working classes. As part of this civilising mission, the teacher was seen to play a crucial “civilising” and paternalistic role through the term *in loco parentis*. In its contemporary perception, the concept of the pastoral has further developed into its institutionalised form of pastoral care in schools, consisting of a range of different disciplinary, counselling and welfare practices. Hence, although the term “pastoral” has been sustained, its implicit religious roots have been hidden from view.

## **THE PERSONAL DIMENSION OF TRADITION**

The third representation of the pedagogical relationship is the “personal” dimension which is as old as the world’s first written accounts of the practice of teaching. Traditionally, teaching, as a practice, emerged when individuals asked questions that took them beyond established discourses, beliefs and values. Teachers such as Socrates and Confucius were not engaged in the work of teaching merely to serve

societal customs or community values and beliefs but, also, to raise questions about human possibilities.

Such a perspective sheds light on why the “personal” in teaching seems always to exist in tension with presumptions that teachers should be single-minded advocates of a particular ideology or set of values. In this section my intention is to illuminate two strands within this tradition which point to the “personal” as a not-yet completed narrative (McIntyre, 1985) – that is, as a dimension capable of generating new conceptions.

As a “personal” matter, the pedagogical relationship is experienced by teacher and pupils as more than an impersonal, businesslike relationship in the service of achieving instrumental ends. It is also a relationship in which people invest aspects of the “self” in terms of personal ideals, principles, personhood and emotions in the process of making teaching and learning personally satisfying and productive. The philosophical literature highlights the existence of individuals who have contributed new religious, political, or humanitarian ideals to the process of education, based on deeply felt personal values which the person regarded as inextricably bound up with his or her existence as a teacher.

Two centuries ago, for example, Rousseau wrote *Emile*, an imaginary account of the education of one child by his tutor, in order to ground the ideal of the “natural” in the development of the child (Winch, 1996; Grimsley, 1973). Each child, according to Rousseau, has a sense of the importance of the preservation of his well being. Not only is this a feature of a child’s life, it is also a desirable one, allowing and motivating the child to become active in the world to promote its best interests. This tendency is called by Rousseau, *amour de soi*. *Amour de soi* is, in a sense, an animal sense of self-preservation, which does not of itself involve the consideration of other human beings.

*Amour propre*, on the other hand, develops from *amour de soi* with the addition of a social and moral dimension: that is, it involves the standing which the child has to other human beings. *Amour propre*, in its healthy or natural state, consists in a child’s desire to be recognised as a moral entity worthy of respect and consideration from



others. The teacher's role in the child's education, therefore, is to ensure that *amour propre* develops independently of the overt influence of the teacher's will on the child. Any other route runs the risk, in the pupil, of inflamed *amour propre* (Winch, 1996, p.423), that is, results from an awareness of domination and may lead to the development of resentment and suspicion of the child towards the teacher.

Rousseau's ideal of natural development concluded that the healthy development of *amour propre* in the child must proceed independently of the overt influence of the wills of others. A healthy *amour propre* ensures that children will, through natural curiosity, develop a judgement which is sound and exact rather than superficial, or imposed. These considerations do not mean that a child must be educated outside a social context, but that his encounter with the social world, i.e. the teacher and school environment must be carefully controlled so that the development of *amour propre* is not diverted into harmful channels (Winch, 1996, p.423).

Such a romantic preoccupation and concern for the child which places it at the centre of education was further developed by the Christian tradition expressed by Froebel and Pestalozzi. Froebel's metaphysical concern was for the centrality of unity and wholeness of the child and consequently his belief that the relationship between teacher and pupil should be an organic process, free from artificial and damaging divisions. Teachers socialised into this tradition talk of themselves in relationship with pupils as "we" and derive satisfaction from feeling "natural" and "whole" in their relationship with pupils (Rusk, et al, 1979). Pestalozzi also placed the child at the centre of education and he maintained that the teacher must consider each and every child individually; that all existing rules of pedagogy which are aimed at children as a group, rather than at a particular child, pervert education and injure the child. Since education, for Pestalozzi, is entirely a matter of the development of the inner potentialities of the child's nature, it can only play the midwife to nature and be a ministering guide to natural forces. Pestalozzi viewed the independent development of the child's powers as the sole natural process that should concern education. However, in order to bring about the consummation of intellectual, moral and physical potentialities, the child needs the assistance of a teacher and his art to provide him with the encouragement to help himself learn according to nature's way – that is, by experience – by becoming aware of reality, by observing the environment

and by direct contact with society. Teachers socialised into this tradition are considered to be poets according to Pestalozzi, because they have the power to influence and form (Cohen, 1983, p.40). Each of these educators brought a sense of the “personal” to the educational endeavour through their own idealism and brand of child-centredness.

There is a growing body of contemporary literature which points to the continued existence of teachers within the teaching profession with a strong dedication to religious, political or humanitarian ideals. Nias (1984), for example, found in her empirical study of teachers in primary schools that such idealist teachers considered themselves to be “crusaders” and “missionaries” actively concerned to create, through their teaching and relationships, a more humane, socially just and constructively critical world (op cit, p.27).

Research further suggests that there is a direct link between teachers’ loss of ideals and teacher burnout, and in some cases, the decision to resign from teaching (Freudenberger and Richelson, 1980). Edelwich and Brodsky (1980) define burnout in terms of loss of ideals and meaningfulness, characterising it as a “progressive loss of idealism, energy and purpose as a result of conditions at work” (op cit, p.14). Such studies highlight the important role that personal ideals still play in the way that teachers come to view their work and relationships with pupils as worthwhile and as making a difference.

A second strand in the way that the “personal” as a dimension of the pedagogical relationship can be understood is from an existential perspective (Feldman, 1996, 2002; Feldman, A. & Rearick, M., 1998; Greene, M. (Ed), 1967, 1978; Hultgren, F. H., 1987; Donnelly, J. F. 1999). This perspective begins with a recognition that the teacher is a *person* who is being a teacher and the learner is a *person* being a learner. Thus the existing *being* or personhood which each brings to the relationship must also be acknowledged and its characteristics revealed.

In *Being and Time*, the philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1962) makes clear the distinction between *knowing* a situation and *being* in a situation. Much of teachers’ *knowing* is well established as a focus for attention: *being* is less attended to.

Heidegger takes as his starting point the human being in the situation of its everydayness. *Being-in-the-world* identifies the teacher's and learner's place in its everydayness, but the hyphens are significant. They express an in-dwelling and, according to Heidegger, communicate a sense of involvement and ontological independence rather than mere physical presence – “being absorbed in the world” (Heidegger, 1962, p.55). Heidegger uses a characteristic name for human beings, to communicate this sense of interdependence with the world, *Dasein*, which literally means “Being there”.

The form of being which applies specifically to relationships is what Heidegger calls *Being-with* which is equiprimordial with *Being-in-the-world* (op cit, p.114):

*“Being-with is such that the disclosedness of the Dasein-with of Others belongs to it; this means that because Dasein's Being is Being-with, its understanding of Being already implies the understanding of Others. This understanding, like any understanding, is not an acquaintance derived from knowledge about them, but a primordially existential kind of Being which, more than anything makes knowledge and acquaintanceship possible”* (Heidegger, 1962, p.123-124).

Existential reflection on the “personal” therefore builds on the knowledge that already exists as part of the self. The teacher comes to realise this knowledge through *being-in-the-world* as a person who discovers their unique way of *being-with* others.

## **CONCLUSION: WHAT TRADITION CONTRIBUTES AND IMPLICATIONS**

Our exploration of the importance of the pedagogical relationship as a central issue in education has achieved three things. First, it has drawn our attention to this relationship as being a culturally determined practice with a tradition that makes it possible to learn from past efforts and limitations. I have reviewed three representations of this tradition, the moral, pastoral and the personal and sketched their role in shaping the meanings of how this relationship has been conceptualised in the past.

Second, I have explored and identified some of the practices associated with each tradition and how they prompt us to consider meanings such as the place of moral authority, the religious, personhood and being in the development of pedagogical relations. Third, by allowing the three dimensions of traditions to continue to “speak” in the present it is evident that their foundational connections to spirit have been obscured or lost altogether, thus narrowing the range of practices possible for this important domain of pedagogy. How can we build a renewed vocabulary which both expands and enriches traditional meanings and gives prominence to spirit as a vital aspect of contemporary pedagogical practice?

My intention in chapters 3 & 4, which follow, is to address this question through the construction of spirit as a relational concept in the philosophical perspectives of Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas and John Macmurray. A renewed vocabulary with which to conceptualise emerging possibilities for the pedagogical relationship is necessary, I argue, if teachers are to continue to respond effectively and responsibly to the changes and tensions of new expectations.

## CHAPTER 3

### PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SPIRIT

#### INTRODUCTION

My purpose in this chapter is to begin the construction of a relational notion of spirit in human relationships through a discussion and analysis of this notion in the writings of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas. My aim is explore a particular tradition of philosophical reflection in which such an inquiry has already been started and reflected on and in which a great deal of work has already been done to refine appropriate concepts.

The chapter is divided into two parts: I shall begin with Martin Buber's contribution first, chiefly because he makes explicit reference to spirit in his *I/Thou* philosophy of dialogue. Buber, of course has already been featured in chapter 1. For Buber the spirit is there wherever "encounter" or "presence" occurs, whether it be with a human being, a tree or a piece of mica. He says that "spirit is word", but his conception of "word" takes in all events in which I and Thou are actualised, whether or not anything is spoken (Kaufman 1970, p.89). A full discussion of the importance of Buber's *I/Thou* as the carrier of the concept of spirit in relationships and more specifically human relationships is explored. It is important to mention at the outset that, while Buber acknowledged the paradox of trying to speak of what is not a graspable theme (Smith 1988, p.39), he centred his efforts on presenting spirit as an "ontology" of the relational reality of the "between", meaning between the I and Thou of his philosophy of dialogue.

The work of Emmanuel Levinas is the focus of the second part of the chapter. Though Levinas acknowledges Martin Buber's influence on his work, he sought to redefine the *I-Thou* dialogue in terms of the sociality of an ethical philosophy. Instead of reducing the *Other* in a spatial way to the sameness of the self within a totalised whole (which would ensure the *I/Thou* reciprocity), Levinas wants to focus on the *Other* as an infinite exteriority, irreducible to the totalising tendency of the self. Levinas, I will argue, offers an account which is founded on an asymmetrical relationship where the *Other* is not merely other than self but a transcendence of self. The transcendence is the moment of openness of the self to the call or ethical demand

of the radical *Other* to be responsible and not to commit violence. The *Other*, therefore, has to be approached as an Enigma, a mystery which takes place in the encounter with the face.

Since I have not presumed familiarity on the part of readers, an introduction to each philosopher is provided which locates each in their historical context, giving also an overview of some of the significant influences on the development of their thought.

## **SPIRIT IN THE I-THOU PHILOSOPHY OF MARTIN BUBER**

### **EARLY INFLUENCES**

Martin Buber was born in Vienna in 1878 of Jewish parentage. Two major cultural influences on the development of his thought and philosophy of dialogue can be discerned. First was his involvement with Jewish loyalties from the time of his youth and later his involvement in Zionism and Hasidism when he became immersed in the religiousness of Judaism. The second was his exposure to European, especially German culture.

Buber spent his youth in the predominantly Jewish area of Poland where he absorbed the richness of the local language which nourished his life-long obsession with words and meanings enabling him to become multilingual, capable of speaking nine languages. By the time he was fourteen Buber was already reading Kant's *Prolegomena* and Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* (Friedman, 1963, 1983). From this early reading of philosophical literature Buber retained some of the convictions found in his later writings. In Kant he found two answers to his concern with the nature of time. If time and space are pure forms of perception, then they pertain to things only as they appear to us (i.e. phenomena) and not to things-in-themselves (noumena). Thus time, reasoned Buber, primarily concerns the way in which we experience the other. But can the other be experienced at all if it is reduced to the scope of phenomenal knowledge, to what Buber later called the I-It relation? Kant also indicated ways of meaningfully speaking of the noumenal, other than in terms of theoretical reason. *Practical reason*, i.e. the categorical imperative that considers the other as an end in itself rather than the means to an end, as well as the *teleological* (aesthetic) judgement developed in Kant's *Third Critique*, seem to admit the

possibility of a rational faith, a faith that resonated with Buber's feeling that the phenomenal is always the gateway to the noumenal.

Buber was later to move beyond Kant by insisting that it is precisely through the sense world – one's fellow human beings, animals, the rest of nature, even art – that human persons could address the eternal Thou and this could be done through genuine I-Thou relationships (Atterton, et al, 2004, p.9). Whereas Kant relied on reason, Buber relied on experience and religious intuition. For this reason, Buber has been referred to as a "transcendental empiricist" (Walters, 2003).

Other philosophical influence on Buber's thinking included the work of Nietzsche (1844-1900) who challenged Western man to face up to the shallow, constricting and hypocritical character of traditional values in order to transcend them by affirming life in its elemental forces. Buber was also open to the influence of Soren Kierkegaard and Wilhelm Dilthey, both of which insisted that spiritual transcendence was a hidden power, which manifested itself in human life (Friedman, 1983). Although Buber never lost his admiration for Kierkegaard, he went on to become one of Kierkegaard's severest critics. In his essay *The Question of the Single One* (Buber, 2002), Buber attacks Kierkegaard's notion of the "single one", who develops a relation with God at the expense of the human relation. In this essay Buber contrasted "the single one" with the "person" who is living in the presence of others and consequently in the presence of the eternal Thou.

As a student Buber was enthralled by the mystical teachings of many religious traditions, and his doctoral dissertation was a study of the thought of a number of Christian mystics of the Renaissance and Reformation (Diamond, 1960, p.7). Ultimately, Buber thought that what mystics were seeking was to unite with the absolute which they regarded as the true reality, whilst depreciating the every day experience as illusory. Buber similarly sought for that ecstatic unity within the soul of man that would enable the mystic to approach the world with renewed power. His early writings expressed this mystical passion for unity and his success as a writer and lecturer won him a great deal of attention when he was a young man.

Despite Buber's early success as a writer and lecturer, he felt dissatisfied with his life and was often left with a sense of being rootless. Buber himself described his feelings at the time:

*"Until my twentieth year, and in small measure even beyond then, my spirit was in steady and multiple movement, in an alternation of tension and release, determined by manifold influences, taking ever new shape, without centre and without growing substance"* (Buber, 1988, p.56).

Buber's search for roots led him to a period of active participation in the Zionist movement, but his involvement left him dissatisfied with the quality of his life, because, as he was later to write, "I professed Judaism before I really knew it" (Buber, 1958a, p.58). His connection with Judaism was later strengthened and made firm by his involvement with Hasidism, a form of communal Jewish mysticism. The Hasidim believed that the spirit of Judaism could only be conveyed by a person who strives to perfect his relations with nature, with his fellow man, and with God by bettering the way he performs deeds that constitute his way of life (Gordon, 1977, p.65). In Hasidism the holiest teaching is rejected if it is found in someone only as a content of that person's thinking (Atterton, et al, 2004, p.15). It is not the dominance of any one faculty, but the unity of all faculties within the personality that constitutes the wholeness of the person. The Hasidim believe that "spirit is ... the totality which comprises and integrates all man's capacities, powers, qualities and urges" (Buber, 1948, p.175). Buber went further to argue that human wholeness does not exist apart from real relationship to other beings. Indeed, in *I and Thou* Buber defines spirit in its human manifestation as "a response of man to his Thou" (Buber, 1970, p.39). This period of involvement in the Hasidic form of mysticism greatly influenced the concepts Buber was later to develop in his philosophy of dialogue.

It was to be a specific and concrete personal experience out of which the core of Buber's thought, the I-Thou relation, arose. According to Buber's own testimony it all began with an experience that came to him in 1909, an experience which brought to an end five years of withdrawn religious contemplation. Buber (1947) describes the personal experience as follows:



*“What happened was no more than that one forenoon, after a morning of “religious” enthusiasm, I had a visit from an unknown young man, without being there in spirit. I certainly did not fail to let the meeting be friendly, I did not treat him any more remissly than all his contemporaries who were in the habit of seeking me out about this time of day as an oracle that is ready to listen to reason. I conversed attentively and openly with him—only I omitted to guess the questions which he did not put. Later, not long after, I learned from one of his friends—he himself was no longer alive—the essential content of these questions; I learned that he had come to me not casually, but borne by destiny, not for a chat but for a decision”* (op cit, p.13-14 ).

His visitor, we gather, had subsequently killed himself. He had come to Buber for help, but left empty-handed with his need not met. So preoccupied was Buber with his inner religious experiences that he did not detect the cry for help silently uttered by his visitor. Buber felt that he had failed to respond as a whole person to the need confronting him and by withholding himself, had failed to make real the possibility of genuine dialogue. He subsequently spoke of this event as a ‘conversion’ that changed the course of his life (Murphy, 1988, p.23).

## **ATTITUDE AND RELATION**

Buber makes explicit use of the notion of spirit in his I-Thou philosophy when he observes:

*“Spirit is not in the I, but **between** I and Thou. It is not like the blood that circulates in you, but like the air in which you breathe. Man lives in the spirit, if he is able to respond to his Thou. He is able to, if he enters into relation with his whole being. Only by virtue of his power to enter into relation is he able to live in the spirit”* (Buber, 1958b, p.28, 39).

To grasp fully how Buber arrived at his interpretation of spirit as *living in the power to relate to a thou*, one must first start with the distinction he makes between two different attitudes that a self can take to another. The two attitudes are the I-thou attitude and the I-it attitude. What is indicated by the term “attitude” is a fundamental

posture, a way of setting the self towards the world and any human being that the self encounters. The self can be viewed, therefore, as a hermeneutic agent, for the type of relationship that occurs between the self and other depends on how the self interprets the other. If the self is in the I-Thou attitude, it interprets the other as its Thou, and the self is in the I-It attitude when it interprets the other as an It.

What should be noted here is that whether the self and the other are in the I-It or I-Thou attitude depends on the self and not the other. This suggests that the self is transformed whenever it alternates between I-It and I-Thou attitudes, since both belong to the self and are different. In the I-It attitude the self cannot relate to another with its whole being, the self can only do so in the I-Thou attitude. In his book “I and Thou” Buber writes:

*“The primary word I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being. Concentration and fusion in the whole being can never take place through any agency, nor can it take place without me. I become through my relation to the Thou, as I become I, I say Thou”* (Buber, 1958b, p.28).

When the self is in the I-It relationship with the other, it is understood as relating to its image of the other and the relationship is tainted by the self’s biases and preoccupations. The self therefore treats the other as an It, an object. Such attitude lacks mutuality and the self remains separate.

A life dominated by the I-It relationship is a life that leaves the relational being unrealised; hence the self is impoverished and suffers alienation (Buber, 1947, p.37). The reason for the self to enter into the I-Thou relationship therefore is so that it can realise its nature as a relational being and hence its nature as a human being (Buber, 1970, p.114). However, Buber does not wholly disdain the I-It relation. In order for the self to nourish itself, to survive, the self must live in the world of It. The world of the statesman or the economist would collapse if it were considered solely in terms of I-Thou (Buber, 1970, p.96).

It is important, also, to understand that an I-Thou relationship becomes an I-It relationship when the Thou is used to carry forward the purposes of the I rather than

to ensure the nurture and growth of the Thou. This selfless relationship Buber defines as the “responsibility of an I for a Thou”. Likewise all “Thous” that are pronounced inevitably become “Its”. As soon as the I-Thou relation is worked out or reflected upon, it becomes an I-It relation.

*“This is the exalted melancholy of our fate, that every Thou in the world must become an It ... As soon as the relation has been worked out ... the Thou becomes an object among objects ... fixed in its size ... Life ... can again be described, taken to pieces and clarified”* (Buber, 1987, p.16-17).

The opposite is also possible. An It may always become a Thou, but only if the I addresses it as Thou (Buber, 1970, p.69, 84).

### **THE SPHERE OF THE BETWEEN**

The I-Thou is a “meeting” between self and other when the self approaches the other as a Thou. The “meeting” creates a *between*, which is not to be considered as a space that exists independent of the self and other, but as an opening that is unique to the self as “I” and its Thou. Since the between is reconstituted with each new “meeting” (Schilpp and Friedman, 1967, p.40), Buber refers to it as an encounter. During such encounters, the self *turns* to its Thou, as the particular other, as a specific person to be addressed.

The participation of both parties is indispensable, the Thou can step up to meet the self but the self must choose to reciprocate or the relationship fails. The relationship is direct, mutual, present and open; both partners bring their whole being into the relation. Buber explains what he means by relating with one’s whole being through his description of a relationship between what he calls a genuine educator and his pupil. We are told that the teacher must know the pupil “not as a mere sum of qualities, aspirations, and inhibitions; he must apprehend him, and affirm him, as a whole. But this he can only do if he encounters him as a partner in a bipolar situation. To give his influence unity and meaning, the genuine educator must live through the situation in all its aspects not only from his point of view but also that of his pupil. As Buber puts it “genuine responsibility exists where there is real responding” (op cit, p.20).

The unfolding of the sphere of the between is the “dialogical” or the dialogue which takes place between I and Thou. Buber says “meaning is not found in one or both partners, it is found only in their dialogue, in this “between” which they live together” (Buber, 1998, p.75). Genuine dialogue means turning towards the other person, while at the same time recognising and fully accepting the otherness of that person in his or her wholeness and uniqueness, rather than by membership of a category.

### **THE INTERHUMAN DIMENSION**

The “interhuman” is a term used by Buber to describe an experience of transcendence during the I-Thou dialogue, when two individuals “happen” to each other, that is when each becomes a “thou” for the other. When this moment occurs there is an essential reminder which is common to both, that reaches out beyond the sphere of the between to the transcendent sphere of the interhuman. Buber explains that the interhuman dimension of the dialogical meeting is when the role that God plays in human relationships is revealed. “Every single thou is a glimpse of the eternal Thou or God” (Buber, 1998, p.123). The action of both parties speaking “thou” becomes an address and a turning towards God, thus making the dialogue a spiritual dialogue. It is not life in the world that separates us from God, Buber argues, but the alienated world of “It”, which experiences and uses. We may know remoteness from God, but we do not know the absence of God, for it is only we who are not always there (Buber, 1988, p.157).

### **LOVE AND THE I-THOU RELATION**

The I-Thou relation is most fully realised in love between man and wife (Diamond, p.28). Here is what Buber calls the exemplary bond, two people revealing the Thou to each other. Love involves the recognition and confirmation of the other in his or her uniqueness and to this end marriage affords the greatest length of time and the greatest degree of intimacy. However, Buber’s interpretation of love should not be understood as the same as the romantic view of love as feeling. The romantic view, so prevalent today, has become the greatest problem of contemporary marriage because it leads people to believe that, when the romantic feeling ceases, responsibility towards the other ceases, and one must seek fulfilment by finding a new partner who will awaken the “sincere” feeling of love.

In the I-Thou relation, love is not to be understood as a feeling, “Love is the responsibility of an I for a Thou” (Buber, 1958b, p.15). Buber clarifies this distinction when he writes:

*“Feelings dwell in a man; but man dwells in his love. That is no metaphor, but the actual truth. Love does not cling to the I in such a way as to have the Thou only for its “content” its object; but love is between the I and Thou. The man who does not know this, with his very being know this, does not know love, even though he ascribes to it the feelings he lives through, experiences, enjoys and expresses”* (op cit, p.14).

In Buber’s interpretation, love cannot be genuine without being grounded in the I-Thou relation, but the relation is not to be equated with romantic love. In fact, Buber goes on to claim “... the man who straightforwardly hates is nearer to the relation than the man without hate and love” (Buber, 1958b, p.16). Diamond (1960) argues that this is an important point to consider because of the tendency of contemporary life to encourage the indifference that precludes, as hate does not, all possibility of recognising the other as a man like oneself. “A man expressing irritation with an elevator operator must turn toward him. He may then recognise his humanity. The man who enters the cubical and does nothing but mutter a number with the same indifference with which he would press a button in an automatic elevator, can come to no such realisation” (op cit, p.28).

## **IMPLICATIONS OF BUBER’S I AND THOU FOR A PEDAGOGY OF RELATIONS**

What important lessons can we draw from this analysis of the notion of spirit in Buber’s I-Thou philosophy? How might it be possible to respond to the project of teaching and learning as a relational process using Buber’s concept of I and Thou? Before addressing these questions it is important to begin with two reminders. The first highlights that the I-Thou as an educational relation is understood to be a pedagogy which works for spirit, the “in-between” of relation as opposed to the objectification of that relation and those within it to things. The second stresses that the unit of analysis must start from an understanding of the relation as grounded in

Buber's "I saying Thou". This said, my purpose is to explore the questions posed above by drawing attention to some classroom encounters which contribute to making I-Thou relations possible. I call these "classroom encounters":

- i. Opportunity for new beginnings
- ii. The glance of the educator
- iii. Concerned presence
- iv. Whole being and Greatness of Character
- v. Second position inclusion
- vi. The effective educator

In the process of the discussion below, I have sought to acknowledge Buber's voice with quotations taken from his various works. Also, taking my cue from Buber, it is intended that these examples provide not so much an answer to the questions I have posed, but indicate a direction; one that points to ways that teachers may shift the centre of gravity from self and the world of It to I-Thou relations as both a possibility and a reality.

i. **OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW BEGINNINGS**

Much contemporary educational thought and practice has become concerned with objects which affect the educational process such as the curriculum, facilities, external teaching guides, and not with the live pupil who interacts with the teacher. For teachers who feel burdened with the heavy hand of routine and the drudgery of administrative tasks, Buber has this to say about the ever present opportunity for bringing the I-Thou dialogue into teaching:

*"In every hour the human race begins. We forget this too easily in the face of the massive fact of past life, of so-called world history, of the fact that each child is born with a given disposition of "world-historical" origin, that is, inherited from the riches of the world events. This fact must not obscure the other less important fact that in spite of everything, in this as in every hour, what has not been invades the structure of what is... This potentiality, streaming unconquered, however much of it is squandered, is the reality child: this phenomenon of uniqueness, which is*

*more than just begetting and birth, this grace of beginning again and ever again” (Buber, 1955, p.83).*

This dialogue demands the assumption that in every hour the human race begins, that each child is unique in this respect and thus a creative event. Recognising the uniqueness of each child, teachers should cherish it so that “this grace may not henceforth be squandered as before, that the might of newness may be preserved for renewal”. This grace, this new child, Buber says, is what makes for an open society, for an indeterminate future. Buber clarifies this when he goes on to say:

*“Future history is not inscribed already by pen of a causal law on a roll which merely awaits unrolling; its characters are stamped by the unforeseeable decisions of future generations. The part to be played in this by everyone alive today, by every adolescent and child, is immeasurable, and immeasurable is the part of who we are as educators” (Buber, 1955, p.83-84).*

## ii. **THE GLANCE OF THE TEACHER**

The greatness of the teacher lies in the fact that he does not choose who will be before him when he meets a new class, he finds them there already:

*“He sees them crouching at the desks, indiscriminately flung together, the misshapen and well-proportioned, animal faces, empty faces, and noble faces in indiscriminate confusion, like the presence of the created universe; the glance of the educator accepts them all” (Buber, 1947, p.89).*

Buber describes this as a special example of the I-Thou situation – a “detached tenderness” in which “the glance of the educator accepts and receives them all” (Buber, 1947, p.94). Through his glance the teacher affirms each pupil as a person with whom the educative relationship can be made.

### iii. **CONCERNED PRESENCE**

Teachers can avoid arbitrariness by creating an atmosphere of mutuality. Buber says that such an atmosphere is one of trust which can grow out of the concerned presence of the teacher:

*“He [the educator] need possess none of the perfections which the child may dream he possesses: but he must really be there. In order to be and remain truly present to the child he must have gathered the child’s presence into his own store as one of the bearers of his communion with the world. Of course, he cannot be continually concerned with the child, either in thought or in deed, nor ought he to be. But if he has gathered the child into his life, then the subterranean dialogic, that steady potential presence of the one to the other is established and endures. Then there is reality between them, there is mutuality”* (Buber, M., 1965, p.98).

The teacher does not have to be continually concerned with the child, but he must have gathered him into his life in such a way that the steady potential presence of the one to the other is established and endured (op cit, p.98).

### iv. **WHOLE BEING AND GREATNESS OF CHARACTER**

The teacher must present himself as a whole person because true dialogue takes place between whole, not fragmented, half-hearted persons... Buber says that “... it is only as a unified being that the teacher is able to live religiously (Buber, 1957a, p.44). The teacher’s concern is “always the person as a whole, both in the actuality in which he lives before him now and in his possibilities, what he can become” (Buber, 1955, p.104). To educate the whole child teachers must themselves be whole:

*“Only in the whole being, in all his spontaneity can the educator truly affect the whole being of the pupil. For educating characters you do not need a moral genius, but you do need a man who is wholly alive and able to communicate himself directly to his fellow beings”* (Buber, 1955, p.105).



Acting from his whole being, the teacher gains insight into the structure of the Great Character. The Great Character, Buber writes:

*“Can be conceived neither as a system of maxims nor as a system of habits. It is peculiar to him to act from the whole of his substance. That is, it is peculiar to him to react in accordance with the uniqueness of every situation which challenges him as an active person. Of course there are all sorts of similarities in different situations; one can construct types of situations, one can always find to what section the particular situation belongs, and draw what is appropriate from the hoard of established maxims and habits, apply the appropriate maxim, bring into operation the appropriate habit. But what is untypical in the particular situation remains unnoticed and unanswered... In spite of all similarities every living situation has, like a new-born child, a new face, that has never been before and will never come again. It demands of you a reaction which cannot be prepared beforehand. It demands presence, responsibility; it demands you” (Buber, 1965, p.113-114).*

The following story illustrates how one teacher, acting from his whole being, protected the dignity of a child and in the process acknowledged his own dignity as a person. The author of the story grew up in Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s. In addition to remembering the poverty, despair and racism he endured, the writer also recollects the sources of light which illuminated his future in the midst of what he calls “dark times”. Several of his teachers are at the top of his list, but most notably:

*“...the never-to-be-forgotten Mr. Porter, my black math[s] teacher, who soon gave up any attempt to teach me math[s]. I had been born, apparently with some kind of deformity that resulted in total inability to count. From arithmetic to geometry, I never passed a single test. Porter took his failure very well and compensated for it by helping me run the school magazine. He assigned me a story about Harlem for this magazine, a story he insisted demanded serious research. Porter took me downtown to the main branch of the public library at Forty-second Street and waited for me while I began my research. He was very proud of the*

*story I eventually turned in. But I was so terrified that afternoon that I vomited all over his shoes in the subway.*

*The teachers I am talking about accepted my limits. I could begin to accept them without shame. I could trust them when they suggested the possibilities open to me...*

*I was an exceedingly shy, withdrawn, and uneasy student. Yet my teachers somehow made me believe that I could learn. And when I could scarcely see for myself any future at all, my teachers told me that the future was mine” (cited in Palmer, 2003, p.376).*

Mr Porter successfully taught maths to many students, but his self-definition as a teacher was not confined to his job description. He never stopped asking the most important questions a teacher can ask: “Who is this child, and how can I nurture his or her gifts?” The student that Mr Porter guided towards writing was the young James Baldwin, who went on to become one of the greatest African-American writers of the twentieth century.

#### **v. SECOND POSITION INCLUSION**

In the one-to-one educational dialogue between teacher and pupil, such as would occur between form tutor and tutee for example, the quality of the relationship is felt by the teacher as it affects the pupil being addressed. Buber calls this “experiencing the other side, or making present” (Buber, 1947, p.96). In order for the teacher to make the pupil present, three conditions must be met: there must be some kind of relationship between the teacher and the pupil – they must “mean something to each other”; there must be an event experienced by them in common; and the teacher must live through this event both as he experiences it and simultaneously from the standpoint of the pupil “without forfeiting anything of the felt reality of his activity” (Buber, 1947, p.97). “Only when he catches himself from over there”, and feels how it... affects this other human being, does he recognise the real limit of his power to educate (op cit, p.100). The relationship has another unique quality, says Buber. It involves a “strange paradox” because it is a “one sided experience” of inclusion of the pupil’s learning by the teacher. The teacher’s act of inclusion is one-sided, Buber

says, because the learning event belongs to the student but the teacher can experience it through the act of inclusion. In a one-to-one educative dialogue therefore the relationship is asymmetrical because a certain social distance between teacher and pupil is necessary if the relationship is to remain educative and not develop into one based on friendship, as Buber writes “In the moment when the pupil is able to throw himself across and experience from over there, the educative relation would burst asunder, or change into friendship (Buber, 1947, p.99, 100-1).

The following example is a story written by a newly qualified teacher and tells of her unique encounter with a pupil:

*“The moment that led me into teaching began after I had begun my first year of teaching. One grey winter day I found myself standing on the second floor of a very old school and being called “teacher”. The child was a new Canadian, from Jamaica. We were looking at the sky and the horizon. We were noticing the colour of the sky and the horizon. We were noticing how the colour of the sky wove through the trees – until it was met by solid branches and gave up its space to the earth. He was drawing and painting a picture of an animal on a landscape. I felt pleased to show him how land and sky meet and felt confident that his painting would reflect our teaching moment together.*

*His painting was of a snail. Its smooth shell-form filled the page of a large drawing paper. The background – the object of instruction – was revealed to me. The perception I had crafted so well for him would be evident in his work. I was feeling powerful as a teacher, confident that in this area of study my influence would provide this student with new understanding.*

*He had placed his snail on a background of brilliant red swirls mingled with vibrant oranges and yellows. There was no evidence of sky meeting land. The snail was in a place of heat and color not the bare bones of the landscape of a cold Ontario day.*

*I held that picture a long time and through many years. It helped lead me into a life of teaching. This child helped me look beyond my convenient framework and I began to see the art of teaching: to see broader strokes and deeper, richer meanings in the way people communicate and express themselves. I began to appreciate and learn from the unique visions and experiences of others and came to translate these understandings into practice. And so, I began to learn about becoming a teacher. Later that first year (so many years ago), I closed my textbooks on models of what to teach, and began to listen with an open mind and heart to the students I was teaching” (Sharon’s story” cited in Labercane, et al, 1998, p.195).*

We see how the experience brought the teacher to a realisation that students may have a way of perceiving the world which is different from her own. Hence the importance of second position inclusion if one is to learn what pupils know, and need, in order to take their learning forward.

I complete this section with a father’s joyful example of an *I/Thou* encounter with his son. McHenry (1997) tells the story of a moment of “shared discovery” and being together that resulted in new learning and knowledge being created.

*“One rainy, gusty afternoon recently, as I was pouring over my manuscript up here in my Cartesian garret, I was surprised to hear excited voices outside the window. Since the words on the monitor had begun to blur anyway – I noticed my bleary eyes at the same time that I heard the voices – I got up from the computer and, hugging the wall of the building so as not to stay under the eaves, descended the outside stair to the yard. As there was a lull in the rain when I reached the ground, I ran across the open space between my little house and the big house and up onto the covered front porch, where I found my wife with our year-old daughter in her arms, and my slightly larger son, soaked through and dripping into a puddle at his feet, a tentative grin on his countenance. He blurted:*

*“I don’t know what came over me – I was just running and running around like crazy in the yard...”*

*“I know”, I said.*

*“What?” he asked breathlessly.*

*“Rain-running happiness.”*

*His face erupted in sunshine, suffused with joy and satisfaction; and I saw in his eye, heard in his voice, the recognition of our secret, exuberant affinity. Where did the moment come from? ... Though I am a parent, I have no sense that anything I did, consciously or not, caused that moment of what was really heart-stopping communion. I did not tell my child about rain-running happiness; I taught him. We invented rain-running happiness together. How was that moment, a gift to both of us, brought forth?” (op cit, p.341-342).*

The story illustrates powerfully how a moment of presence, shared authentically, with another can open up a space for new learning and perceiving. Father and son produced their own co-invention, “rain-running happiness”. The primacy of dialogue was also present, illustrating, in this case, the mutuality of the I/Thou.

#### vi. **THE EFFECTIVE EDUCATOR**

In relation to the teaching act, Buber characterises contrasting approaches to teaching with suggestive imagery, which he calls the “funnel and the pump”. The metaphor of the funnel, for Buber, reflects mostly the traditional authoritative view of teaching where the teacher (the one who knows) pours the material under study into the receptive minds of pupils. This view emphasises the importance of objective knowledge, of rules and patterns to be copied. Buber argues that this “preliminary declaration of what alone was right, made for resignation and rebellion (Buber, 1947, p.88-9).

The metaphor of the pump reflects the progressive teaching approach. This approach emphasises the subjective side of knowledge, the teacher's role being one of facilitating the unfolding potentialities within the pupil. According to Buber, giving the pupil freedom to develop will not in itself ensure that he will have two experiences which Buber considers to be "indispensable for the building of true human life... sharing in an undertaking ... and entering into mutuality" (op cit, p.87).

Although Buber contrasts authority based teaching with the progressive approach, he is not concerned with a model to solve the freedom versus authority dichotomy but the importance of human encounter and genuine relationship. The teacher, says Buber, is neither a funnel nor a pump, but the effective representative of the world to his pupil (Buber, 1947, p.89-90). By this statement Buber seems to mean that the teacher not only selects the parts of the curriculum to present to the pupils, but this selection must be knowledge that the teacher has experienced and taken into his own being so that the knowledge "lives" in the person of the teacher. Buber says "no one can show others a reality except as it presents itself to him" (Buber, 1957b, p.100). Any body of knowledge, therefore, can attain the quality of significance for the pupil only through his encounter with a person in whom the knowledge "lives". Education is therefore not primarily a matter of content, but an encounter between persons. It is through this encounter that the pupil grows and not through any intrinsic merit in the content of the curriculum. "The teachings must not be treated as a collection of knowable material; they resist such treatment: Either the teachings live in the life of a responsible human being, or they are not alive at all (Buber, 1948, p.142).

So far in this chapter I have begun the construction of a relational notion of spirit through an exploration of the part it plays in Buber's *I/Thou* philosophy of dialogue. I have discussed how Buber makes explicit use of spirit to assert the priority of the *I/Thou* relation over the I-It. Spirit argues Buber is between the I and Thou. It is a synonym for the relation and also for the dialogue that unfolds. I have further argued that whereas the *I/Thou* relationship enables us to realise our nature as relational beings and hence our nature as human beings, entering into an instrumental I-It relationship leaves the relational being, and hence the spirit of the relation unrealised. In the next part of this chapter, I turn to the second aspect of our relational notion of spirit, the concept of the *Other* in Emmanuel Levinas's ethics of responsibility.

# EMMANUEL LEVINAS'S ETHICS OF THE *OTHER*

## SITUATING LEVINAS

Emmanuel Levinas was born in 1906 in Kaunas, Lithuania to Jewish parents. Although best known for his work as a French philosopher, he maintained a strong bond with his religious roots. He moved to France in 1923. Between the years of 1928 and 1929, he resided in Germany where he studied under Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Levinas published his first book, *Theorie de l'intuition dans la phenomenologie de Husserl*, in 1930 and became influential in France for his translations of Husserl's and Heidegger's works into French. In the late 1950s and early 1960s Levinas began to formulate his concept of the *Other* and to assert the primacy of the ethical turn to the *Other* in his two major works, *Totality and Infinity* (1961), and the later work *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (1974).

Whilst formulating his ideas Levinas was also engaged in a long and persistent reflection on religious and biblical themes. He remained a thinker crucially informed by the demanding intellectual Lithuanian tradition of Judaism which advocated lucidity and realism in place of the pious Hasidim tradition with its emphasis on mystical moods.

Levinas consistently describes himself as a philosopher, rather than a theologian (Davis, 1996, p.93). However, all commentators who have written on Levinas's work accept that there is a constant interchange of vocabulary and ideas between his philosophical leanings and his religious ideas. Levinas clarified his position on this issue in his book *Difficult Freedom* (1963, 1976), a collection of essays in which he wrote that, although religion and philosophy were "two distinct moments", both were part of the same spiritual process, which is the approach of transcendence. In setting out this line of argument Levinas claims that ontological thinking is a form of thought which gives all prestige to the Same and denies transcendence: that is, it acknowledges nothing outside of itself, hence leaving no place for *Otherness* or alterity (Davis, 1996, p.96). Philosophy is therefore part of a process in which religion is involved because of the difficulties associated with talking rationally about God are the same as those raised by *Otherness*.

Further, the death of God (or of one who inhabits the world behind the scenes) presents us with an awesome spiritual situation. This is because, in the perspective of Levinas, the “transcendence” can “no longer be described in the nouns designating in beings, or the verbs in which their essence resounds” (Levinas, 1998, p.184). A completely new vocabulary is required capable of describing the circumstances in which the very meaning of the word God comes to thought. As part of his scholarship, Levinas saw the necessity of identifying and using key terms in his project which would serve to suggest a spiritual transcendence to an absolute *Other* which could not be signified. The key *spiritual terms* Levinas identifies for use in his ethics are *infinity*, *epiphany*, *enigma*, *inspiration*, *saying*, *desire* and *responsibility*. The meaning Levinas attaches to these terms will be illuminated in the course of this chapter.

In his autobiography, Levinas described his life as “dominated by the presentiment and memory of the Nazi horror” of World War II (Levinas, 1990, p.291), and there is no doubt that his ethics is directly related to his experience at that time. With the exception of his wife and daughter, most of his family were murdered by the Nazis. Levinas himself became a prisoner of war in Germany. Levinas argued that the Holocaust not only contravened the fundamental principles of morality, but actually placed those principles into question. “The essential problem is this; can one speak of a morality after the failure of morality?” (Levinas, 1988, p.176). Did not reason altogether fail to become (in Kant’s words) “practical” precisely when, during the holocaust, it was most needed? Levinas believed that there was more at issue than simply the impotence of philosophy and its inability to arrest the natural course of violence in recent history. For Levinas it was not merely the inconclusiveness of human reason that was to blame for violence, but reason itself, which was not only incapable of stopping violence, but was shown in important respects to be in complicity with violence. The experience of the Holocaust, coupled with Heidegger’s affiliation to National Socialism during the War, understandably led to a profound crisis in Levinas’s enthusiasm for the latter’s work. Whilst laying bare in his earlier essays and criticising the philosophical presuppositions of totalitarianism, Levinas felt that Heidegger could not simply be forgiven, but must be transcended (or moved beyond). If Heidegger is concerned with Being, Levinas is concerned with ethics, which, for Levinas, is beyond being – Otherwise than Being.



In his post-war writings up to and including *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas wrote a number of commentaries on Martin Buber's I-Thou philosophy. In his first essay devoted to Buber, entitled *Martin Buber and the Theory of Knowledge* (1958), Levinas assimilated Buber's philosophy to "an entire movement of contemporary thought" (Levinas, 1996, p.19). He further praises "Buber's fundamental contribution to the theory of knowledge" and attributed "great spiritual importance" (op cit, p.23) to the gesture of attaching primacy to the I-Thou relation over the I-It. He went on, however, to pose several "objections" to Buber's philosophy which, I shall include in this study. I do this, not with the intention of defending one against the other, but because of the opportunity it provides for greater clarity and a deepening of understanding of the contributions of these two philosophers for my thesis.

### **LEVINAS'S MOVE AGAINST FUNDAMENTAL ONTOLOGY**

Levinas's contention is that Western philosophical thought has consistently practised the suppression of the *Other* (Davis, 1996). This is because first philosophy has often been an ontology in which the place of *Otherness* or alterity is perceived as a temporary interruption to be eliminated, or reduced into the same – that is, in order to offset the shock of otherness, the *Other* is acknowledged only in order to be suppressed or possessed. As a point of clarification here, Levinas uses the term "Same" (translated from the French *même*) to mean both self and same. To clarify his use of the term in this way, Levinas argues that the self has an horizon made up of everything it knows. When the self encounters another, it attempts to absorb the alterity (otherness) of what it encounters into the self's horizon. In this way the self reduces the alterity of the *Other* both actually or potentially to the Same. In *Totality and Infinity* (Levinas, 1969), Levinas refers to this process as the totalising tendency of the self. Hereafter the terms "self" or "I" will be used to represent Levinas's interpretation of the term "Same".

The ontological imperialism of Western thought, which Levinas alludes to, can be shown to have manifested itself in different forms. As Davis (1996) observes:

*"The Platonic theory of knowledge as anamnesis (recollection) asserts that I already know what I seek to know, all knowledge is already*

*contained within myself; Husserlian phenomenology, with its concepts of intentionality and representation, establishes the Ego as the source of all meaning and knowledge; the Heideggerian relation of being to Being entails the exclusion of anything that might lie outside that relation. Thus, philosophy is an egology, asserting the primacy of the self, the Same, the subject or being. The Other is acknowledged to be suppressed or possessed” (op cit, p.40).*

After explicitly renouncing ontology as fundamental, Levinas announces his own endeavour which is to achieve an ethical turn in philosophy in order to make it susceptible to an encounter with what it has always suppressed, an encounter with the *Other*. In order to accomplish this task it became necessary for Levinas to undertake a critique of Heidegger’s thesis of the pre-eminence of Being, an ontology which Levinas argues, continues the tradition of ontological totality in Western philosophy.

My intention in what follows is to provide a brief sketch of the main thrust of Heidegger’s phenomenology of Being in order to illuminate Levinas’s opposition and his separation from Heidegger by posing the questions “What is otherwise than Being? What lies beyond Being?”

## **BEING AND BEYOND BEING**

In *Being and Time* (1962) Heidegger “calls attention to the forgetting of Being”, and attempts to (re)establish the “pre-eminence of ontology over metaphysics” (Levinas, 1987, p.53). Heidegger argues that, in seeking the metaphysical, we have forgotten the here and now, earthly existence; we have forgotten Being. What is needed he contends, is an interrogation and recovery of the meaning of Being. Thus Heidegger takes up the question “What is the meaning of Being?” His response to this question is to reformulate thinking in terms of the verbal form of “Be-ing” rather than the normative form of “Being”. This enables him to interpret “Being” as always already relating, always already interpreting, always already “there”, Be-ing.

Heidegger uses the term *Dasein* to name that through which Being comes to be known. The *Dasein* (literally: being there) indicates *Dasein* is situatedness in time and space; and this situatedness is the inescapable condition which makes it possible for

the truth of Being to be revealed (Davis, 1996, p.15). Being cannot be known; indeed it does not exist, outside the moment and place from which Dasein understands it. So, the understanding of Being does not liberate *Dasein* from its historical existence; on the contrary, understanding belongs to historical existence, and Dasein can only understand Being as historical. Being therefore replaces consciousness, which is free and transcendental with *Dasein*, but is dominated and overwhelmed by history. *Further, possibilities for sociality and communion become part of the relationship of Dasein to Being rather than a relationship to others. Dasein remains fundamentally solitary and it is in terms of solitude that the analysis of Dasein in its authentic form can be pursued* (Levinas, 1987, p.89-93).

To summarise what has been discussed so far: Heidegger's focus is on articulating the freedom of Being and in resolutely taking up the freedom which is disclosed within the limits of Dasein. Being must be understood as inseparable from temporality and historicity. What Levinas finds in Heidegger is a phenomenology which is totally immersed in the world, in experience (the rootedness of the human subject in contingent physical activity), and desire.

The main thrust of Levinas's criticism of Heidegger can now be revealed. Whilst Heidegger's phenomenology of Being illuminates the freedom of the self in terms of Dasein, it does not refer to the possibility of the self having its freedom called into question in other than ontological terms. Therefore, the ontology of situated temporal, embodied existence does not concern itself with the self having its freedom called into question such that its actions, or potential actions, are shown to be unjust, violent or evil. Thus, it overlooks the experience where the self may, ontologically speaking, choose to commit violence, even when the self "knows" that doing so would be unjust. Levinas, therefore, charges Heidegger with placing the highest priority on ontology which is problematic to the degree that it illuminates the freedom of the self without putting it into question ethically. The problem is not ontology per se, but ontology's pre-eminence; of subsuming ethics into ontology.

Levinas goes on to pursue this line of argument in the first of his major works, *Totality and Infinity* (1961) by asking the question, what is there otherwise than Being? Levinas's answer is that this something outside the totalising tendency of the

self is transcendence, exteriority, infinity, the *Other* (Davis, 1996, p.34-35). I turn now to an explanation of how Levinas is using these key terms in his philosophy of the ethical encounter.

## **THE ETHICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN SELF AND LEVINAS'S RADICAL *OTHER* – THE FACE TO FACE ENCOUNTER**

In Levinas's perspective, the ethical encounter between Self and Other cannot be explained simply in ontological terms because it involves more than Being. The *Other* is infinite and this idea of infinity consists of recognising that one is approaching an absolutely exterior being. The infinity of the *Other* guarantees that its alterity cannot be subsumed into the Self's horizon and, in turn, this serves to guarantee the exteriority of the *Other*.

The ethical relation with the *Other* is concretely experienced in the face-to-face of social relations. However, how the term "face" is being used by Levinas needs further clarification. According to Levinas:

*"The way in which the Other presents himself, exceeding the **idea of the Other in me**, we here name face. This mode does not consist of figuring as a theme under my gaze, in spreading itself forth as a set of qualities forming an image. The face of the Other at each moment destroys and overflows the plastic image it leaves me, the idea existing to my measure and to the measure of its ideatum – the adequate idea"* (Levinas, 1961, p.43, 50-51).

The *face* may be a real part of the body to be encountered seen and experienced, but for Levinas it is before all else the channel through which alterity presents itself, and as such lies outside and beyond that which can be experienced. Both the reality of the encounter and the elusiveness of the face are crucial to Levinas's argument (Davis, 1996, p.35). The reality of the encounter is the experience of transcendence at the moment when the self's idea of totality becomes disrupted. Since the *face* of the *Other* points to the infinity of absolute *Other*, the self realises the existence of an absolute alterity beyond the totality of Being. The ethical relation is therefore an

asymmetrical relation because the presence of the *Other's face*, as Levinas interprets this term, comes from a height that is transcendent to the self (Levinas, 1969, p.215).

### **INFINITE RESPONSIBILITY**

The infinite responsibility of the self can be demonstrated in three main ways. First, the ethical saying of the *Other* may consist of the biblical command “You shall not commit murder” (Levinas, 1969, p.277). This is what Levinas refers to as the call for responsible action in place of violence. Second, the face of the *Other* may be one of deprivation. In this example the *Other* represents “the widow, the orphan and the stranger, spoken of in the Book of Jeremiah” (op cit, p.72). Responsibility here means that the self cannot approach the *face* [of the destitute *Other*] with empty hands and a closed home (op cit, p.172). Third, the responsibility of the self to the *Other* extends even to the acceptance of any violence the *Other* may do to the self. In this example the self is confronted with the freedom of making a choice between responsible action towards the *Other* (which would open up a dialogue, or teaching and hence reason, society and ethics) (op cit, p.223), or hatred and violent repudiation.

### **ILLUMINATING THE RELATIONAL SPIRIT IN LEVINAS'S ETHICS**

It is now possible to explore how Levinas's conception of the radical *Other* contributes to the construction of spirit I am developing in the context of the pedagogical relation. I have argued previously that the transcendence of spirit to the realm of the “between” which Buber started is the concrete first meaning of spirit in relational terms. However, Levinas did not think that Buber's idea of the relational spirit as meaning that which transpires between the I and Thou, could account for an ethical structure which emphasises the absolute alterity of the *Other*, or otherwise than Being. This requires an asymmetrical relationship where the *Other* is not merely other than self and mind but a transcendence of the totality of the self, such that the ethical relationship consists of approaching an absolutely exterior and infinite being. The *Other*, therefore, has to be approached as an enigma, a mystery that cannot fully be known or explained or possessed because it falls outside the totalising influence of the self's horizon.

Unlike Buber, Levinas avoids using the term spirit directly in his ethics; however he is led by the logic of his stress on exteriority and absolute alterity to use a vocabulary containing spirit words (Smith, 1988) in his characterisation. For example his use of transcendence, alterity and infinity to mark the absolute “otherness” of the spirit’s intention in the ethical relation serves to separate it from Buber’s reciprocal spirit of the “between”.

Levinas further employs the breath-words ‘inspiration’ and ‘expiration’ to express the position of the *Other* in relation to the self. Inspiration is used to signify the *Other*’s already commanded responsibility from the self and expiration to mean the surrender of the self to the service of *Other*. The relationship with the *Other* that determines the meaning of selfhood in relation to the *Other*, therefore, is “respiration”, or breathing, “the very pneuma of the psyche” (Levinas, 1981, p.116). Respiration here means the opening of the self to the *Other* which is not a conditioning or foundation of the self in some principle. It reveals its meaning only in relation to the *Other*, in the responsibility and substitution the self is prepared to show towards the *Other*.

Levinas’s ethics also inspires a spirituality which occurs in the enactment of the ethical responsibility for the *Other*. His analysis of the ethical relation as the passing of God’s “trace” in and through the face of the other posits a relation to God that is oblique rather than straightforward and a relation that is unavailable in the first instance to conscious representation and hence theological interpretation. In the process of developing this aspect of his ethics, Levinas draws on his analysis of Descartes’ *Third Meditation* (1641) as a crucial point of reference. Levinas isolates two movements in Descartes’ thought. The first is that of *Cogito*, in which the subject confirms its own existence as beyond doubt. However, what is of greater interest to Levinas, and which later became crucial for the development of his ethics, was Descartes’ meditation on the second movement in which the subject proves to itself the existence of God and thus finds itself to be created by something which transcends it. The Cartesian subject seizes itself as subject by reference to the non-self. For Descartes the Infinite comes from God and thus justifies his own Christianity. The insight and significance of the Cartesian discovery for Levinas lies in the encounter with the Infinite as something beyond knowledge, a being that maintains its total exteriority with respect to him who thinks it (Levinas, 1969, p.42).

More importantly, the encounter does not endanger or annihilate the subject, but on the contrary enables its constitution. So Levinas appropriates the Cartesian idea of the Infinite for his own ends and transforms it into the ethics of the *Other*: “The Infinite is the absolute *Other*” Levinas claims: “It is not the proof of the existence of God which is important for us here, but the breaking of consciousness, which is not a repression into the unconscious but a sobering up or an awakening” (Levinas, 1981, p.104-5).

An account of the relational spirit in Levinas’s ethics can now be illuminated to be a transcendence of self interest in the service of the *Other*. In the transcendence, the self is awakened to the naked vulnerability of the *Other* and also to the *Other* as one who judges. This is registered in the face of the *Other*, beyond what is actually said. The *Other*’s vulnerability and judgement represents a call to the self not to respond with violence but to assume responsibility. Since the face contains a trace of the Infinite, of God, the call for responsibility and justice is a holy call requiring attentiveness, respect and responsible actions. The responsibility of the self to the *Other*, then, becomes the capacity to respond to the Infinite.

### **IMPLICATIONS OF LEVINAS’S ETHICS FOR A PEDAGOGY OF RELATIONS**

Levinas’s work offers no systematic approaches or models by which an understanding of his ethics can be applied in practical situations. This is because, as he himself argues, the emergence of responsibility to the *Other* grows not out of a rational exercise of being, or out of an understanding of the *Other* as like the Self, but out of a call or demand, that is a *saying*. If this is the case then the question one must ask is: how might teachers bring the process of learning about the practical implications of Levinas’s ethics in the enactment of a relational pedagogy?

One of the strengths of Levinas’s ethics is that it provokes a reconsideration of the taken-for-granted definitions of the *Other* currently being supported within educational practices. Educational attempts to work across differences by deconstructing centre and margin, inclusion and exclusion; self and other, together with anti-racist policies and projects, are examples of practices seeking to make transparent the discourses that marginalise people through the way they position certain groups as *Others*. Such curricular and pedagogical initiatives frequently focus

on learning about those designated as other through their untold histories, their narratives of self identification and their demands for recognition. This is done in order to identify those structures of power that distort or violate certain individuals and their communities. The ethical attention to other in these initiatives uses the language of *difference* as opposed to otherness in the explicit hope that by finding out more about the difference between self and other, it would be possible to work with difference in responsible ways.

The important point which needs to be made is that preserving the *Other* as radical alterity, as exteriority, is the very reason why Levinas avoids writing in terms of difference or opposition because both these notions ultimately view self and *Other* from the standpoint of totality. To describe the self as different from the other implies that there is some grand, objective perspective from which qualities can be viewed and compared. It also entails a knowledge of the other which would deny its position as *Other*. To think in terms of opposition would be to conceive of self and other as two sides of a coin; defined in relation to one another and therefore belonging to the same totality. We can see here that Levinas's *Other* is not the socially constructed other that pedagogies of social justice take for granted. For Levinas, on the contrary, the *Other* lies absolutely beyond the self's comprehension and should be preserved in all its irreducible strangeness. For those who are sceptical, it may appear that Levinas's privileging of the *Other* only serves to reify the very otherness that has been at the heart of inequity and social violence which anti-racist and inclusion practices try to alleviate in the face of continuing injustice and violence. Sceptics may well feel justified in inquiring how Levinas's ethical metaphysics can help us to change the conditions under which the concrete *Other* suffers.

In my view Levinas's ethics is asking us to consider knowledge itself as an ethical question: that is, what relation to the *Other* is necessary in order for knowledge to be possible? Levinas proposes that in order to acquire any knowledge there is already in place an *orientation* to receive and work with a new idea, or theory, or experience. Knowledge requires, in the first instance, an openness to something new, something foreign, something totally *Other* or beyond self. The approach to knowledge implies, first and foremost, an ethical susceptibility to what is outside of and exterior to us



(Levinas, 1974, p.120). In this sense it is the self's susceptibility to the *Other*, not knowledge about the *Other* to which a pedagogy of relations must address itself.

According to Levinas, knowledge of the *Other* can only be obtained in the traces of susceptibility found in the actual event of a face-to-face encounter. It requires attentiveness, which means paying close attention to the enigma of the *face*, the hesitant pause between knowing and responsibility when one unexpectedly finds oneself "disarmed", fundamentally questioned, and beckoned to respond. It means paying attention to the vulnerability one feels in the face of the unknowable *Other* when the language of the *said* does not reach the *Other* and one is exposed to the *saying* behind the *said*. Levinas writes that this is "the ethical resistance" offered by the *Other* who can oppose, not necessarily by a force of resistance, but the very *unforseeability* of his reaction (Levinas, 1969, p.199). It means resisting a negative focus on "totalising" the *Other*, otherwise one is building one's own world through resisting the obligation one has towards the *Other*. As this is done one begins the process of turning self and *Other* into stereotypes.

We are now in a position to revisit the question which was posed earlier: "how might teachers begin the process of learning about the practical implications of the spirit of Levinas's ethics in the enactment of a relational pedagogy?" In order to address this question I will use two examples of pedagogical encounter to illustrate how ethical responsibility to the *Other* may be conceptualised according to Levinas's account. I will call these:

1. Heteronomy in the face-to-face encounter
2. Curriculum, ethical possibilities and teaching Otherwise

### **HETERONOMY IN THE FACE-TO-FACE ENCOUNTER**

Pedagogical ethics, following Levinas's schema, is rooted in teachers' responsibilities to pupils as radical *Others*. These are pupils who may regard their membership in a particular cultural, religious or ethnic group as being a mark of their otherness which places them completely outside the ability of teachers to determine their meaning as persons. When encountering such pupils face-to-face, teachers may find it difficult to relate to them by falling back on well learned responses. Hence teachers are placed in a position of uncertainty and vulnerability in the face of the *Other*.

To illustrate how this might occur in a concrete situation I will give an example of an encounter which most teachers experience at some point in their teaching career. In the course of everyday work in the classroom, or around the school, a teacher may find herself exposed to the resistance of a pupil as a radical *Other*, in a face-to-face encounter. The encounter may develop into a situation which profoundly challenges any power difference to which the teacher may have previously laid claim as an aspect of her institutional role. The natural response of the teacher would be to use all the powers vested in her role to bring the pupil back under her control. Despite these measures, the pupil may continue to demonstrate his resistance with “all the unpredictable resources of his freedom” (Levinas, 1987, p.50). Yet, in the midst of confrontation and resistance, something else is also possible. As Levinas remarks:

*“He [the pupil] can also – and here is where he presents me his face – oppose himself to me beyond all measure, with the total uncoveredness and nakedness of his defenceless eyes, the straightforwardness, the absolute frankness of his gaze. The solipsist disquietude of consciousness seeing itself, in all its adventures, as captive of itself, comes to an end here: true exteriority is in this gaze which forbids me my conquest. Not that conquest is beyond my too weak powers, but I am no longer able to have power: the structure of my freedom is ... completely reversed”* (Levinas, 1987, p.56).

Here Levinas is referring to a person experiencing a sense of being “disarmed” by the face in the moment when she transcends her ego. Transcendence of the ego awakens the teacher to the face of the pupil as not representing “a force blocking my force”, but as what is “putting into question the naïve right of my powers” (op cit, p.58). The face, therefore, becomes a communication which gives birth to moral conscience by drawing the teacher out of herself and inviting her to put an end to her “violent” response. Thus, Levinas contends, “justice, well ordered, begins with the *Other* (Levinas, 1987, p.56). This of course does not mean that the teacher will always respond justly. It merely means that the opportunity is afforded for the teacher “to know or be conscious... to have time to avoid and forestall the instant of inhumanity” (Levinas, 1969, p.35). In responding appropriately and with responsibility, the

teacher places herself *in service* to the *Other*, rather than *control* because “The relationship with the *Other* puts me into question, empties me of myself and empties – without end, showing me ever new resources. I did not know I was so rich” (Levinas, 1987, p.94).

It is important to note here that, for Levinas, ethical responsibility to the *Other* should not be confused with the obligation one may feel for the “destitute” or “needy”, for whom one has *pity*. Ethical obligation does not coincide with pity because, although it may be the case that the *Other* to whom one feels morally obligated is “destitute” or in some way “needy”, it is not destitution or neediness that elicits the call for responsibility, but the pupil’s goodness – a goodness which moves a person to “take up a position that the *Other* counts more than my ego” (Levinas, 1969, p.247).

We see here, then, how in the face-to-face encounter, the structure of a teacher’s freedom may be completely reversed. Whilst freedom before meant being able to fall back on prescribed responses inscribed by one’s professional role, freedom now consists in the possibility of either responding in good faith to the call of the *Other*, or putting it off and defending one’s position. According to Levinas’s ethics, the former response opens up the teacher to being responsible, ethically, for the *Other*, whereas the latter response closes the teacher down, isolates and creates a relationship with the *Other* consisting of mutually antagonistic egos.

Before completing this section, I return to the term “heteronomy” in order briefly to consider the question of why the face-to-face relation is considered by Levinas to be heteronymous. In the face-to-face encounter, in order for the pupil as *Other* to call the teacher’s freedom into question, the teacher has to be disturbed by the *Other* and this disturbance has to come from beyond the teacher’s horizon to dominate. The otherness of the *Other* therefore exceeds the self. This is what Levinas calls the idea of *infinity*: in this case, it is the ability of the teacher to maintain a relationship with that which she cannot comprehend, grasp, or contain. The pupil is simply not what the teacher thought, his expressions, his speech, his words, exceed the teacher’s definitions, themes and categories. Hence the teacher does not come to learn about the pupil simply through the pupil’s use of gestures, concepts, or words. Rather the *Other* attends his speech; he comes to the assistance of his own discourse through a

*saying* beyond the *said*. This “saying” is what is communicated in the face with “miraculous abundance; and inexhaustible surplus” (Levinas, 1969, p.96-97). In this sense the relation is not one of domination, a hegemony at work within a totality, but is the presence of infinity breaking the closed circle of the teacher’s totality” (op cit, p.171). Through the rupturing of totality, the teacher learns what she did not know about the pupil before, and this is where the possibility of the ethical relationship begins. Thus, for Levinas, “the face-to-face both announces a “society” [a we] and also permits the maintaining of a separated “I” (Levinas, 1969, p.68). Hence the relationship becomes through and through a heteronomy (Levinas, 1987, p.54). Levinas explains this further when he says, “as soon as I acknowledge that it is “I” who am responsible, I accept that my freedom is anteceded by an obligation to the *Other*. Ethics redefines subjectivity as this heteronymous responsibility, in contrast to autonomous freedom” (Levinas and Kearney, 1986, p.27).

To conclude: the basis of Levinas’s ethics is the sheer fact of *Otherness* – that somehow penetrates the teacher’s psychic and ethical space from the outside. The responsibility for the *Other* cannot begin in the teacher’s commitment or decision therefore. It is not something that the teacher can go looking for or control. In other words, Levinas is not setting forth a “particularly recommendable” variety of consciousness” (Levinas, 1987, p.58) that the teacher ought to adopt. For instance, today I will try to teach this pupil heteronymously, or today I will try to “infinite” this pupil rather than totalise him. A relational pedagogy of the *Other* requires attending to the *Other* as infinitely unknowable. A teacher cannot assume it is within her power to bring otherness under her control, but can only respond in good faith to the summons to responsibility that the *Other* calls forth by presenting his “face”. To turn away from the “face” of this pupil – this *Other* – is to do violence, particularly when the teacher hears the call to responsibility but fails to recognise and acknowledge her obligation. The potential of this relationship to do violence is what makes it ethics right from the start.

## **CURRICULUM, ETHICAL POSSIBILITIES AND TEACHING OTHERWISE**

In schools, a prescribed National Curriculum not only delineates the educational issues with which teachers should be concerned, but promotes learning that is predetermined, sequential and ordered by performance objectives. Much attention is

therefore paid to the *said*, or the knowledge that pupils are expected to gain, much of which comes from teacher-proof curricular designed by external theorists. Successful teaching and learning comes to be regarded as the fulfilment or failure to deliver the principles of the curriculum. In this model of teaching and learning, ethics is imposed from outside, often through political and moral imperatives, or guidelines. What such a model of teaching and learning forgets, however, is the uncertainty and unpredictability of the pedagogical encounter itself. Certainly, teachers can never know beforehand what may be of personal significance to pupils when they deliver the curriculum. This is because pupils bring their own idiosyncrasies and unconscious associations which enable them to resist, transform or create symbolic attachments that pedagogy cannot predict or control. However, as the vehicle through which the curriculum is made real for pupils, teachers cannot escape their role – they require pupils to make symbolic attachments and meaning out of the curriculum (Todd, 2001, p.438). This is particularly the case when the curriculum and assessment requirements connect poorly with the needs and interests of pupils or when, what is being taught, refuses to mean to pupils what the teacher intends. Yet, it is in these moments, Levinas argues, when students struggle to make sense out of and symbolise their relationship to the curriculum, that teachers are called to be receptive and responsible.

Levinas (1969) says that teaching and learning can be conceived as an ethical relation if the teacher is open to learning from the pupils (as *Others*), more than the self already holds: He writes:

*“It is ... to receive from the Other beyond the capacity of the I, which means exactly: to have the idea of infinity. But this also means to be taught. The relation with the Other, or Conversation, is ... an ethical relation; but inasmuch as it is welcomed this conversation is [enseignement]. Teaching is not reducible to maieutics; it comes from the exterior and brings me more than I can contain”* (op cit, p.51).

Levinas’s view of teaching and learning as “bringing more that I can contain” is antithetical to the Socratic method, argues Todd (2001). In the Socratic view, learning happens almost in spite of the teacher, because it is a pedagogical

recollection and self knowledge. The teacher merely acts as a midwife, facilitating the birth of pupils' knowledge. It is therefore the skill of the pupil, not the social encounter per se that matters. The maieutic method erases the significance of the *Other*, and claims that learning is a recovery contained within the I, rather than a disruption of the I provoked by the *Other* in a moment of sociality (op cit, p.438). Levinas (1969) writes that: "The primacy of the Same was Socrates' teaching: to recover nothing from the *Other* but what is in me, as though from all eternity I was in possession of what comes to me from the outside..." (op cit, p.43). In contrast, what is important to Levinas's view is that it is the sociality – the encounter from the *Other* who is radically distinct from the self that enables the self to learn and to change.

What teachers can learn from Levinas's ethics in relation to curriculum is the importance of being attentive to the range of possible responses that pupils generate out of their own positions of vulnerability. Such an understanding means accepting the fragility of pupils' identities as they seek to develop meaning for themselves and remaining open to outcomes which cannot be predicted; for example the passion of opinion, the exchanged looks, the indifference to a question or the desire for love and recognition (Stone, 1995, p.184). All this and more comprise the "tiny yet colossal details" that bring a measure of uncertainty to the teaching/ learning process and carry serious ethical weight in terms of delivery of the curriculum. If uncertainty is inevitable, then the quality of responses that teachers make to pupils as *Others* is rooted not solely in pre-determined curricular content knowledge, or abstract adherence to ethical rules and principles, but in the uncertainties of shifting social relations. Moreover, this exposure to uncertainty helps teachers to resist a negative focus on "totalising" pupils and teaching methods through becoming more responsive and thoughtful.

Teachers are often placed in a space of tension between responding to pupils as *Others* and responding to students through the expectations and obligations placed on them by the curriculum. As discussed above, the meanings pupils make are not cast beforehand, nor can teachers assume that fulfilling their curricular obligations will necessarily lead to "non-violent" interactions. It is important therefore that teachers acknowledge the ethical significance of the curriculum as meaning being receptive to that which is unpredictably returned to them from pupils as *Others*, and the

vulnerabilities that accompany them. Also from the perspective of the pupil, the teacher as *Other* should ensure that the curriculum is delivered in a way that continually exceeds the bounds of its content, or *said*, in terms of pre-specified tasks. In this way both teachers and pupils receive from the teaching and learning process “more than [each] can contain” (Levinas, 1969, p.51).

## SUMMARY

This chapter has focused on the construction of spirit as a relational concept through an analysis of the philosophical perspectives of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas. I started with Buber as the pioneer who makes explicit reference to spirit in his *I/Thou* philosophy of dialogue when he observes that spirit is not in the I, but between the I and Thou. For Buber, entering into the spirit means entering into the power to relate to a *Thou*. He went on to develop a pedagogical system suggesting examples of how *I/Thou* relations can become a possibility and reality in classroom encounters between teacher and learner. Using Buber’s pedagogical system as a guide and direction, I drew attention to six examples of classroom encounters which illustrate how some of Buber’s main concepts can be applied in practice. These are summarised as follows:

- **Opportunity for new beginnings** – means that the teacher recognises the uniqueness of each child because it is this new child, Buber says which makes for an open society, for an indeterminate future.
- **The glance of the educator** – when meeting a new class, the teacher ensures that her glance acknowledges and accepts all her pupils. In doing so she affirms each pupil as a person with whom an educative relationship is possible.
- **Concerned Presence** – in order to avoid arbitrariness, the teacher creates an atmosphere of trust through her concerned presence. Although the teacher is not expected to be continually concerned with each pupil, nevertheless it is important that she finds ways to establish a steady potential presence with each pupil.
- **Whole being and Greatness of Character** – means that the teacher brings her whole being to the encounter and her concern is also with the whole being of the pupil. It is only through acting from the wholeness of her being that the teacher gains insight into the Great Character. Such an insight enables her to

respond appropriately to the uniqueness of every situation even when it brings challenge or conflict.

- **Second position inclusion** – the teacher practices inclusion by making her pupils present. This requires recognising and including their viewpoints and ideas in the educative dialogue.
- **The effective educator** – means that although the teacher is aware of different educational approaches, her real concern is the encounter with her pupils and fostering genuine educative relationships. She becomes neither a funnel nor a pump but the effective representative of her subject discipline which has attained the quality of significance because it lives through her. Educating others becomes not primarily a matter of content, but an encounter between persons.

In the second part of the chapter we turned our focus to the *ethical relationship* at the heart of Levinas's philosophical perspective. I began with the challenge which Levinas makes to Heidegger's ontology of being, or any ontology, that perpetuates the primacy of being as the basis of philosophy. For Levinas, to do so perpetuates the potential for violence intrinsic to an ontologically based conceptual system that would totalise being at the expense of the radical *Other*. In Levinas's perspective, the ethical encounter between self and *Other* cannot be explained simply in ontological terms because it involves more than Being.

I went on to note that Levinas's project is to give prominence to the alterity of the *Other*. In my subsequent discussions, I describe how, in doing so Levinas offers us a new conception of *responsibility* which predates "subjectivity", an idea of the *face* of the *Other* as representing infinity, the trace of God and an appeal, and also a new vocabulary which uses *spirit* words in his characterisations.

Levinas makes ethical responsibility for the *Other* a precondition for subjectivity. It is a responsibility that bypasses rational calculating thought, existing as an openness or willingness to respond to the *Other's* face as a summons that cannot be ignored. Responsibility in the ethical relation is therefore not a matter of choice or free will; one is already consigned to infinite responsibility. In this schema, subjectivity can never be-for-itself prior to being-for-the-other. We see, therefore, that Levinas's



conception of ethical responsibility represents a departure from the prevailing view of what it means to be a responsible moral agent since the prevailing conception of moral responsibility is considered an attribute of an already constituted subject (Standish, 2001, p.339). However, Levinas's insistence on *Other*-centredness does not mean a forfeiture of one's subjectivity; rather subjectivity is what follows responding to the call of the *Other* as responsibility accepted.

I went on to note that, unlike Buber, Levinas does not provide us with a pedagogic system or model for the application of his ethics in practical situations. However, his work does offer us a schema for developing a pedagogical ethics that is rooted in the teacher's responsibility to pupils who present themselves as radical *Others*. I discussed two kinds of pedagogical encounters as illustrative of different aspects of ethical responsibility: heteronomy and curriculum and teaching otherwise. The main implications of Levinas's philosophy for our understanding of the ethical in the pedagogical relation can be summarised as follows:

- **Face-to-face** – the ethical begins in the face-to-face encounter with a pupil who resist being brought under the totalising influence of the teacher or curriculum.
- **Transcending the ego** – the teacher must transcend the response of the ego and awaken to the face of the *Other*, not as representing a force blocking my force, but as a face which represents the *Other's* vulnerability and destitution.
- **The appeal for responsibility** – the face in its radical vulnerability is ethical and calls for responsibility. It is an appeal that comes from an ethical position of height and commands the teacher to interpose herself between the pupil and harm's way.
- **Infinite responsibility** – the teacher realises that she is already consigned to infinite responsibility without reservations – including when the *Other* is being her judge and persecutor.
- **Passive attention** – learning to attend to the face of the *Other* signals the beginning not only of responsibility but also of response. The teacher becomes changed in the encounter. By accepting responsibility, the teacher enters into subjectivity and learns what is needed to respond ethically.

- **Bringing more than I can contain** – in terms of the curriculum, teaching and learning can be conceived as an ethical relation if the teacher is open to learning from pupils (as Others).
- **Receptivity to what is returned** – the teacher realises that it is in those moments when students struggle for meaning – struggle to make sense of and symbolise their relationship to the curriculum – that she is called upon to be receptive to what is returned to her and respond ethically.

Finally, both Buber and Levinas provide us with new vocabularies for enriching our understanding of traditional meanings such as the religious, pastoral and personal being. Buber stresses the element of the meeting that the *I/Thou* relation entails. It is what transpires in the spirit of the between that moves the relation beyond a mere pastoral interest, for example, counselling or welfare. In the relationship there is directness, presence, inclusion and dialogue which nurture's pupils' capacity to wonder as well as stimulating their potentials for growth and development.

Levinas pushes our thinking about the place of the moral and personal being further with ethical commitment to the *Other*. Such a commitment requires of the teacher not just a "being-with" but a "being-for" pupils as *Others*. The ethical relation develops from a position of radical openness and responsibility which does not reduce pupils to what is already known. In Levinas's schema, it is the *Other's* "face" that evokes responsibility and not conflict. Responsibility becomes not a case of following rules nor an intellectual exercise, but a serious ethical engagement. The spirit of the ethical relation is the capacity to make a responsible response, which is a precondition for subjectivity. Ethics therefore becomes first philosophy.

Buber and Levinas also provide alternative ways of approaching pedagogical actions in terms of one's agency or "I". Both agree that action is not individual but relational, for Buber the attitude of the "I" is important, whereas Levinas highlights the totalising tendencies of the "I" and places more weight on the quality of response to the face of the *Other*.

In the next chapter I broaden the context for my construction of a relational concept of spirit further to include John Macmurray's work so as to develop a new form of the personal.

## CHAPTER 4

### JOHN MACMURRAY'S NEW FORM OF THE PERSONAL

This chapter presents an overview of John Macmurray's philosophical work in order to develop a new *form of the personal* in human relationships. I have devoted an entire chapter to Macmurray's work because, as a Scottish philosopher, he is not widely known. In more recent times, however, an increase of interest in his philosophical principles has occurred (Hay, 1998; Fielding, 2000a, 2004; Stern, 2001).

To begin to place Macmurray's thought in context the chapter begins with some of the earlier influences which led to his formulation of a new category for the form of the personal. This is followed with a more detailed account of Macmurray's understanding of the nature of the human person, his account of persons in relation and the distinction he makes between personal and functional relations. The chapter concludes with a discussion of four of his insights which I use to support my interpretation of spirit as a relational concept in his philosophy.

#### EARLY RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES

John Macmurray was born in Scotland in 1891 into a deeply religious family with strong Calvinist roots. In his autobiography (Conford, 1996) he describes his early religious upbringing as being one of "instruction in the organised correctness of doctrine, coupled with a distrust and suppression of emotion in favour of the revealed truth" (op cit, p.31). With this went a strict morality expressed in rules and prohibitions based on the authority of scripture which was taken for granted as universally binding.

In addition to these religious commitments, Macmurray developed a continuing interest in science, particularly astronomy and biology, which gave him the desire to become a scientist. However, he was persuaded by both his family and teachers to study Classics when, in 1909, he became a student at the University of Glasgow. Nevertheless, Macmurray found a way to take classes in geology as well which provided him with training in various branches of science and their practical applications. On the importance of his scientific training Macmurray writes:

*“This solid grounding in science and scientific method has been of greatest possible use to me as a philosopher in a country where few philosophers have any direct experience of science ... The more general impression which I carried away from my scientific studies, however, was that science is far easier than any of the humanistic studies and especially than philosophy. This is, I suspect, a major reason for its astonishing success in our time” (“Autobiography”, cited in Conford, 1996, p.34).*

Macmurray’s dual commitment to both religion and science was to remain with him throughout his life.

In 1913 Macmurray moved to Balliol College, Oxford. The outbreak of the First World War the following year posed him an intense moral dilemma, as his religious faith inclined him to pacifism (op cit, p.14). Following a spell in the Royal Army Medical Corps, he became a lieutenant in the Cameron Highlanders. The War years were to prove of great importance to Macmurray’s philosophical development. Well into the war he spent much time in the trenches, where death was stark. Macmurray wrote that he lost his fear of death and came to regard death as an “incident in life” (Conford, 1996, p.35). The experience helped him to formulate some of his deepest convictions about the nature of religion and its reality. Real religion, he writes, is not a matter of beliefs, which are derivative. Real religion lies rather in the depth of one’s being and is at one with being genuinely human; it is a development of the personality itself because all personal experience is open to religious interpretation (op cit, p.35-36).

Macmurray came to regard the War as a representation of a civilisation which had become deeply flawed in its values and assumptions and the result of a deep sickness in the Western soul. While on leave, he was invited to preach at a church in London and he discovered that the congregation resented being told to prepare for the work of reconciliation after the war had ended. The hatred with which supposedly good Christian people responded to his call for reconciliation convinced Macmurray that theology had failed to effect positive relations between human beings; consequently,

he turned his back on all forms of organised religion. In his autobiography Macmurray describes this experience as follows:

*“The congregation took it [the talk on reconciliation] badly; I could feel a cold hostility menacing me, and no-one spoke to me when the service was over. It was after the service that I decided, on Christian grounds, that I should never, when the war was over, remain or become a member of any Christian church”* (Conford, 1996, p.37).

Following his decision not to become a member of any organised church, one of the tasks Macmurray set for himself was to read the Gospels as though he was discovering them for the first time. The results surprised him. In particular, he found in the Gospel of St John that Jesus made *Friendship* the hallmark of his discipleship. He proceeded to use the theme of *Friendship* in a keynote address in 1929 to the student Christian movement. His address entitled “Ye Are My Friends” marked his recovery from the despair of the First World War, enabling him to resume his spiritual journey which led him eventually to join the Society of Friends. It also gave him the term *Friendship*, as the key to his Philosophy of the Personal.

A further result of his war experience was that Macmurray turned to philosophy (Conford, 1996, p.18) because he believed that attempts to interpret human behaviour through mechanistic and organic metaphors were inadequate in conception and harmful in their effects (op cit, p.54). A new logical form was required to do justice to the personal self. However, the self must be conceived, not theoretically, as a subject, but practically, as an agent acting in the world. The unity of the personal cannot be thought of merely as a form of individual self, but only through the mutuality of the personal relationship. The self becomes a person in community in virtue of its relation to others. These relations, Macmurray argues, must be entered into to realise the common humanity which makes those involved persons. A community therefore cannot be brought into existence by organisation alone. It is not functional, argues Macmurray, its principle of unity being rather personal (op cit, p.165), constituted by the sharing of a common life.

Macmurray's philosophical work culminated in the publication of his two Gifford Lectures, *The Form of the Personal*, consisting of two volumes, *The Self as Agent* (1953) and *Persons in Relation* (1961).

## THE CRISIS OF THE PERSONAL

Macmurray's concern in these volumes was to highlight the way in which traditional academic philosophy has led to a situation in which man is seen impersonally, thus impeding the possibility of accounting for his relations either to persons or God ("always an "I", never a Thou"). The reason this has occurred, Macmurray explains, is because:

*"Philosophy aims at a complete rationality. But the rationality of our conclusions does not depend alone upon the correctness of our thinking. It depends even more upon the propriety of the questions with which we concern ourselves. The primary and the critical task is the discovery of the problem. If we ask the wrong question the logical correctness of our answer is of little consequence"* (Macmurray, 1953, p.21).

Macmurray was unable to accept either of the two main philosophical trends which came to dominate the 1950's intellectual scene in England. There the dominant figures were Ayer, Ryle, Austin and Wittgenstein. Oxford and Cambridge were the centres of philosophy and they allowed no place for metaphysics, system-building or relevance to social issues, whereas on the continent the new schools of existentialism and phenomenology were becoming influential. In Macmurray's view English philosophy had abandoned the traditional content of philosophy and concentrated on the formal method, whereas European philosophy was addressing the essential issues but abandoning the method. These two forms of philosophy, logical empiricism and existentialism, although they represented opposite reactions to the breakdown in tradition, were nevertheless united in the extremity of their difference. The logical empiricists were sacrificing problems in order to maintain method; the existentialists were relinquishing method in wrestling with the problem (Macmurray, 1953, p.27).

Macmurray summed up his estimation of these two emergent philosophical tendencies as follows:

*“Existentialism has discovered, with sensitiveness of feeling, that the philosophical problem of the present lies in a crisis of the personal: logical empiricism recognizes it as a crisis of logical form and method. Both are correct, and both are one-sided. The cultural crisis of the present is indeed a crisis of the personal. But the problem it presents to philosophy is a formal one. It is to discover or to construct the intellectual form of the personal”* (Macmurray, 1953, p.29).

The new philosophical task of our time, according to Macmurray, is an exploration of the personal world and, more specifically, the discovery of the category “the form of the personal”. Macmurray further argued that such a task should only be accomplished through established philosophical methods, thereby preserving the subject as a distinct and significant form of intellectual endeavour (Conford, 1996, p.48).

### **MACMURRAY’S DEFINITION OF THE PERSON**

On the grounds that the legacy of Descartes’ *cogito* still persists, Macmurray’s starting point was to show that, since the time of his famous assertion, “I think, therefore I am”, the conception of the individual has been overly theoretical and egocentric, failing to account for the everyday experience of other selves. This inevitably, has led to atheism, which Macmurray finds unacceptable. Based on his analysis of the history of modern western philosophy, he also argues that there have been two distinct phases - one dominated by a mechanistic view of the world and of the human person; the other dominated by an organic view of the world and the human person. Neither view, he concluded, was adequate.

Descartes’ philosophy, Macmurray claimed, was the clearest expression of the mechanistic view of the world and the human person. According to his interpretation, Descartes’ insight - *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) had left a lasting and negative legacy: the concept of a person as being an isolated purely thinking being:

*“Historically, the “cogito” represent(ed) a challenge to authority and a declaration of independence; and so well did its author know this that he*



*went in fear of the penalties that his boldness might incur. For Descartes it was equivalent to the assertion "I am a substance whose existence is thinking ... to think is my essential nature. I have therefore both the right and duty to think for myself and to refuse to accept any authority other than my own reason as guarantor of truth". In this way the "cogito" constitutes an appeal from authority to reason" (Macmurray, 1953, p.75).*

If the human person is no more than a detached consciousness, Macmurray concluded, then it becomes impossible for us to explain human action. Moreover, it becomes difficult to understand the existence of other human beings and even more so, the existence of God.

By accepting Descartes' philosophical dualism in which experience is split into mind and matter, religion becomes a question of pure subjectivity. Macmurray articulated his concerns about the progressive decline of the authority of religion when he observed:

*"It is undeniable that the historic development of modern philosophy has moved in this direction. In its beginnings it is unquestionably theist, and confident of its capacity to demonstrate the existence of God. Even Hobbes and Machiavelli profess a religious belief which we should consider hardly compatible with their modes of thought. This early confidence has gradually faded; and in this end has been replaced by the conviction that any attempt to sustain religion by philosophical reasoning is to be suspected of special pleading. The long argument which Descartes initiated has moved decisively in the direction of atheism" (Macmurray, 1953, p.19).*

Macmurray also saw a second movement in modern philosophy which he described as organic, with Kant as its best representative. Kant was critical of rationalism, arguing that people could not come to a proper understanding of the world through thought alone. This knowledge is arrived at through the synthesis of what is experienced through the senses and the concepts and categories of pure thought. These exist in the mind and are imposed on sense experience to make the world

meaningful. However, Kant also argued that these categories of pure thought or understanding were in the mind of the knower rather than aspects of things as they really are in themselves. The only thing a person could know through this process therefore is only the world *as it appears*, and not the world as *it-is-in-itself*. This noumenal world is, to all effects, beyond the capacities of human knowledge.

Macmurray's criticism of Kant is that he was not able to make any proper connections between a thing as it-is-in-itself and how it appears to the person. He was unable to show that the real object out there and the knowledge of that object which a person has in her mind actually correspond. Like Descartes, Kant argued that the knowing subject was separate from the object. Macmurray's solution to the problems of dualism was to transfer the centre of gravity in philosophy from thought to action. It is in this sense that he went on to define the *self as an agent* and to substitute "I do" for "I think" as the defining character of personhood.

*"What is here proposed is that we substitute the "I do" for the "I think" as our starting point and centre of reference; and do our thinking from the standpoint of action" (Macmurray, 1953, p.84).*

Macmurray does not deny the importance of thinking, arguing rather that thinking is merely one of the activities that a human person engages in. Action is more fundamental and, therefore, a more appropriate expression of what it is to be a person. Consequently, he conceived the self as being an agent able to act to bring about change in the world. Since to act is to modify the other, agency is also at the heart of the human capacity for self-transcendence or, as Macmurray puts it, the ability to act in terms of the nature of Other. Two important implications follow from Macmurray's approach: first, if agency is the centre of reference, then embodiment is presupposed; second, the possibility of action requires that there be something to act upon and so the existence of the Other is also presupposed. Macmurray concluded that "to exist is to be part of the world, in systemic causal relation with other parts of the world" (Macmurray, 1953, p.106).

An understanding of *self as agent* would shift the classical starting point for any theoretical account of the person, first from thought to action, and then from an

egocentric orientation to personal relations. Macmurray (1961) clarified this shift in the introductory chapter of *Persons in Relation* as follows:

*“The first volume ... under the title The Self as Agent ... was concerned to exhibit the primacy of the practical in human experience, and the need to transfer the centre of gravity in philosophy from thought to action ... The effect of transferring the centre of reference to action ..., is that man recovers his body and becomes personal ... it ends the solitariness of the “thinking self”, it sets man firmly in the world which he knows, and so restores him to his proper existence as a community of persons in relation”* (op cit, p.11-12).

### **MACMURRAY’S ACCOUNT OF PERSONS IN RELATION**

In *Persons in Relation* (1961) Macmurray goes on to clarify his understanding of “the form of the personal”. Having previously suggested that the self exists as an agent, or someone who acts, Macmurray goes on to argue that there has to be a relation of self to the other. He states that:

*“The thesis we have to expound and to sustain is that the self is constituted by its relation to the Other: that it has its being in its relationships; and that this relationship is necessarily personal”* (op cit, p.17).

Macmurray justifies his idea that *person in relation* constitutes the most important understanding of the human being, by considering the primary social relationship between mother and child. Here the primary human relationship exhibits a necessary impulse to communicate, thereby revealing that interhuman relations are the foundation of our existence. On this basis, human experience is essentially a shared experience and the “I” exists solely as one element in the complex “You and I”:

*“In the human infant – and this is the heart of the matter – the impulse to communication is his sole adaptation to the world in which he is born. Implicit and unconscious it may be, yet it is sufficient to constitute the mother-child relation as the basic form of human existence, as a personal mutuality, as a “You and I” with a common life ... Thus, human*

*experience is, in principle, shared experience; human life, even in its most individual elements, is a common life; and human behaviour carries always, in its inherent structure, a reference to the personal Other*" (Macmurray, 1961, p.60-61).

## THE COMMON LIFE AS PERSONS IN RELATION

While the fact of human co-existence would be sufficient grounds for seeking to establish mutually beneficial relations, Macmurray further states that co-existence is not simply a description of human life - it is a description for the full development of the human person. Even though withdrawal from relationships is necessary for the individual to develop in opposition to others, as an agent, her personal nature is incompletely expressed until she returns to active engagement in relations with those others. Such relationships, according to Macmurray, may be entered into from either negative or positive motivations. A negative motivation results in egocentric or self-centred action, whereas a positive motive results in heterocentric, or other-centred action:

*"Action which is negatively motivated is defensive. Fear as we have said, is for oneself, and the agent himself is the centre of reference for the action. We find this mode of distinction a useful one; and we shall refer to it by saying that negatively motivated action is "egocentric", while positively motivated action, which has its centre outside oneself, in the Other, we shall describe as "heterocentric" (Macmurray, 1961, p.71).*

Self-centred action prevents the relationship from being mutually enjoyed, and therefore, is detrimental to the full expression of either the self or the Other. Conversely, Other-centred action is both the true expression of the self as agent and an invitation to the other person to reciprocate, thereby encouraging the expression of his personal nature also. For this reason, Macmurray maintains that the quality of a person, as a person, is determined by "the quality of her personal relations" (Macmurray, 1961, p.95)

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FUNCTIONAL AND PERSONAL RELATIONS

Macmurray expands upon the type of relations required for growth by distinguishing between personal and functional relations. Essentially, functional relations (as found in the workplace) for example, involve the relation of persons on the basis of their instrumental worth, whereas personal relations are grounded in the appreciation of one another's intrinsic worth. In the former case the relationship is founded on the basis of instrumental purposes, whereas in the latter case the relationship exists for its own sake. Macmurray states that, in this respect, while functional relations are necessary, they are not sufficient: that is, they represent the means rather than the ends of life. Macmurray refers to functional relations as "societies" and to personal relations as "communities". The former is comprised of the association of members, while the latter describes a fellowship of friends. Macmurray (1961) clarifies these distinctions in the following way:

*"Any community of persons, as distinct from a mere society, is a group of individuals united in a common life, the motivation of which is positive. Like a society, a community is a group which acts together; but unlike a mere society, its members are in communion with one another; they constitute a fellowship. A society where members act together without forming a fellowship can only be constituted by common purpose... A community, however, is a unity of persons as persons. It cannot be defined in functional terms, by relation to a common purpose... but only by the motives which sustain the personal relations of its members. It is constituted by mutual affection... The structure of a community is the nexus or network of the active relations of friendship between all possibly pairs of its members" (op cit, p.158).*

Fundamentally, therefore, authentic personal relations involve the treatment of persons as persons and not as objects. To treat another person as a person implies the recognition of her agency. Moreover, the expression of agency implies the freedom to act and the individual who engages in heterocentric action will avoid restricting the freedom of the other. When the relations of persons are functional or impersonal, however, the consequences of their actions are hidden; thus a system of justice and law is required to eradicate special privilege or to protect others from harm. In this

way, in a society, justice secures the social condition, rather than a community, which rests upon a positive apperception by its members of the relation which unites them in common humanity and friendship.

To summarise what has been discussed so far. Macmurray's argument is that the intention of being in relationship with another person provides the opportunity for friendship, which becomes the hallmark of what it is to be a person in relation with others. The characteristics of friendship are what best describes the basic structure of community. In friendship, the relationship between two people is heterocentric. Each person acts and feels and thinks with love and concern for the Other and each person realises self in and through the other. Both are related as equals, and this equality is intentional. Also, in friendship those involved are able to realise their freedom as agents. Since they have no need to live in fear of the other, or to act out of fear of the other, each is able to be fully him or herself.

Macmurray believes that equality and freedom are essential qualities of friendship and are constitutive of community. To achieve real community, equality and freedom is offered to everyone through the personal relations (Macmurray, 1961, p.158). This vision of a community of friends enables Macmurray to formulate the ideal of the personal:

*"We can therefore formulate the inherent ideal of the personal. It is a universal community of persons in which each cares for all the others and no one for himself. This ideal of the personal is also the condition of freedom... for every person"* (Macmurray, 1961, p.159).

### **MACMURRAY'S PERCEPTION OF THE RELIGIOUS ENTERPRISE**

Macmurray says that the creation and maintenance of such relations cannot become a political task, since enforced freedom is a contradiction in terms. However, he is well aware that community is a fragile notion and that the bonds of friendship could breakdown if fear of others were to overcome genuine fellowship. He writes:

*"But now we must recognise the negative within the positive definition. The continuous possibility that hostility and enmity may break out between*

*members of the community and destroy the fellowship is inseparable from any consciousness of it. For community is a matter of intention and therefore problematical. What is celebrated is not a fact, but an achievement. Moreover, the community so far achieved is imperfect, and contains not merely the possibility but also the evidence of failure. In the face of this problem, religion is itself intentional. Its celebration of communion is also a means of strengthening the will to community"* (Macmurray, 1961, p.163).

According to Macmurray, religion becomes essential for maintaining the bonds of friendship and community. He states that religion is the celebration of communion with others and, in particular, he points to the religious motifs of love and forgiveness as evidence of the intention to extend community. Whilst exposing the divisiveness of doctrinal distinction, Macmurray nevertheless highlights the importance of ritual in the sustenance of positive personal relations:

*"The celebration of communion cannot be solitary or private reflection: it must be a common activity. The members of a primitive community do in fact live a common life; but they also perform in common certain ritual activities which express their consciousness that they live a common life and their joy in the knowledge. This celebration of their fellowship is a religious activity..."* (Macmurray, 1961, p.162).

Macmurray goes on to further clarify that, while religious belief involves assenting to creeds and dogma, religious faith is an attitude of mind. Fundamentally, therefore, he is stressing sincerity over moral codes and a shared belief between each member in the religious aspects of their lives:

*"We may define the function of religion as being to create, maintain and deepen the community of persons and to extend it without limit... by eliminating the dominance of fear in human relations. To achieve this would be to create a universal community of persons in which all its members were free in relation. Such a community would be the full realisation of the personal"* (Macmurray, 1961, p.163).

Religion itself, therefore, becomes a personal reality, based on the idea of a personal Other who stands in the same mutual relationship with each member of the community. Religion as a personal reality creates the unity of the community of persons and is a unity of action (Macmurray, 1961, p.164). Macmurray goes on to describe God as the Universal Other or Universal Agent whose actions unify the actions of each community member. The continuing intention of the Universal Agent is the unity of all human beings, Macmurray (1961) asserts:

*“In its full development, the idea of a universal personal Other is the idea of God”* (op cit, p.164).

For Macmurray, the move from I think to I do, from the idea of the person as an embodied thinker to that of social agent, also involves a transformation in their understanding of the nature of God. Instead of God as First Cause, or Prime Mover, God becomes personified as one who acts in relationship with the world and with human beings:

*“Religious reflection, when it is full blown, must represent the original personal author of the community as the author of the world; and the life of the community as the fellowship of the world – of man with Nature as well as man with man... Religion would then be simply the celebration of communion – of the fellowship of all things in God. Meanwhile it sustains the intention to achieve fellowship”* (Macmurray, 1961, p.165).

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR A PEDAGOGY OF RELATIONS**

What can we learn from this analysis of John Macmurray’s philosophical contribution that we can add to our knowledge and understanding of the possibilities for spirit in pedagogical relations?

In his development of a new form of the personal, Macmurray provides us with a third way in which spirit can be conceived in pedagogical relations. His contribution suggests that spirit is in the unity of the personal action and requires an understanding of what it means to be an *intentional agent* on the one hand and



also becoming a person through a transformed notion of *community*. His genius lies in the way he preserves the integrity of intention and action of personal agency and also the uniqueness of the personal relationship as a means of transforming the functional. Below I present a summary of four of Macmurray's main insights, which support this interpretation of his thought, and their relevance for the pedagogical relation.

His first insight is that the *personal is not only individual, but also relational*. According to this insight an individual becomes a person through her agency, that is her ability to act intentionally *and also* through entering into personal relations with others. In terms of the pedagogical relationship what this insight suggests is that in classroom situations which have become impersonal, the teacher can act with intention to initiate and enhance opportunities for human flourishing.

Macmurray's second insight is that *the functional life is for the personal life and the personal life is through the functional life*. This interdependence of the functional and the personal is explained by the distinction which Macmurray makes between what he calls *functional* relations and *personal* relations. Functional relations are found mainly in workplaces, they are entered into in order for people to achieve ends which are instrumental. They are necessary, Macmurray claims, because people depend on them for facilitating the satisfaction of many of their needs. But they are not sufficient, because they only represent the means rather than the ends of life. Personal relations are also necessary if people in functional organisations are to realise the common humanity which makes them persons rather than mere functionaries.

What this insight suggests for the pedagogical relation is that, if schools are allowed to become solely functional organisations where pupils and teachers are valued primarily on the basis of their instrumental worth, they risk becoming organisations that do not care for their teachers and students as persons, only as bearers of results and outcomes. Such an attitude places considerable pressure on teachers to treat students impersonally, as objects valued only for their performance. Macmurray's schema suggests, however, that such an attitude need not be the last word in our understanding of relationships in workplaces. In order

to resist becoming impersonal and alienating organisations, schools must find ways to promote personal relations through activities which bring people together in friendship and community.

Whereas most accounts of community are inadequate primarily because there is a tendency to comprehend it as a thing, an entity, Macmurray's third insight posits a transformed notion of community, understood more as a process which brings individuals together to achieve purposes they have in common. According to Macmurray, for such a community to be expressive of personal relations, it must demonstrate two important features. First, it must comprise a voluntary association of persons, united because they share a common set of values. A second feature is that the principle of personal relationship is *equality* which enables *friendships* to develop. To treat another person as a friend implies the recognition of her agency, that is, her freedom to act and make her own decisions.

Macmurray's fourth insight is that a *religious attitude* is essential for maintaining the bonds of friendship and community. Religion becomes the celebration of communion with others, in particular it points to the religious motifs of love (agape) and forgiveness as evidence of the intention to extend community. Macmurray's view of religion therefore, promotes it as a common activity in the world which finds expression in people's actions.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In this and the previous chapter I considered ways that we can build a renewed vocabulary for the pedagogical relation which both expands and enriches traditional meanings and gives prominence to spirit in a pedagogy of relations. I explored this central theme in the philosophical perspectives and pioneering work of Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas and lastly John Macmurray. All three thinkers understood human action to be relational: a relation that is committed to the *I/Thou* "meeting" in the here and now (Buber); is inevitable and calls forth ethical responsibility (Levinas); and is community minded (Macmurray). Until we understand this point we will not fully appreciate the wider possibilities for the moral, pastoral and personal dimensions in the pedagogical relation and their foundational connections to spirit.

In the next part of this study I turn to some of the challenges to spirit in the broader context which acknowledges that education is a contested terrain (Edwards, 1979; Giroux, 1987), in which contrasting conceptions of how teachers carry out their work are struggled over. This has resulted in particular ideologies and practices becoming dominant in mainstream pedagogy which constrain teachers to teach and relate to their students in pre-specified and impersonal ways.

## **PART 2**

### **FACTORS UNDERMINING SPIRIT IN PEDAGOGY**

#### **OVERVIEW**

In this part of the thesis a critical view is taken on the ascendancy of the culture of efficiency within the discourse of teaching as a public service which, I will argue, has succeeded in ensuring that a technical rational language permeates the teaching profession. Such a focus neglects an understanding of pedagogy as a relational process and hence works against spirit in the expectations which teachers and pupils have of the pedagogical relationship.

Chapter 5 considers the development of the technical mode of rationality in schools from its adoption as a public service ideal, premised on the perceived need to eradicate teacher inefficiency. Some of the consequences for the quality of the pedagogical relationship which followed such an orientation are explored, with particular emphasis on the ability of teachers to foster relationships with “at risk” students.

Chapter 6 explores some of the issues around the intensification of teachers’ work resulting from the drive for efficiency and technocratic rationality. Whereas Chapter 5 was concerned with the effects on the pedagogical relationship from the viewpoints of “at risk” students, Chapter 6 considers the effects that pressures for accountability and intensification are having on teachers’ emotional and psychological functioning. Two things are of specific interest in this chapter: first, the effect that time pressures have on teachers’ ability to forge the kind of pedagogical relationship many believe intuitively to represent the spirit in their work; second, and more importantly, recent changes in teachers’ attitudes suggest a greater willingness on their part to consider alternative discourses and practices in order to achieve preferred pedagogical identities.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CULTURE OF EFFICIENCY AND TECHNOCRATIC CONSCIOUSNESS**

Traditionally, most people who chose to enter the teaching profession felt called or “inspired” to a particular form of service or vocation (Booth, C., 1988; Huebner, D., 1987). There was a magnetic pull and “inner incentive” which prevented people from perceiving teaching as just a routine job (Emmet, D., 1958; Hansen, D. T., 1997). Teachers were perceived to be people whose main concern was for the education and welfare of their pupils and the role of “teacher” was accepted as being performed in a personal way. How one carried out the role was always a matter of personal choice. This traditional view of teaching as a vocation, however, has been overshadowed by the more powerful and influential ideal of teaching as a public service (Shipman, 1984).

Proponents of this view argue that teacher inefficiency is a central issue in education, requiring increased control by external experts and central government in order to eradicate it. Two main pressures therefore have been brought to bear on teachers and teaching, since the beginning of the twentieth century, to ensure conformity to the ideals of public service. First, the work of proponents such as Edward Thorndyke in the field of measurements and testing, Franklin Bobbit in curriculum construction and Joseph Rice in educational administration have served to legitimate the practice of scientific management in education as neutral, value free and universally applicable without regard to context (Britzman, D., 1991, p.30). In their discourses learning is seen as the achievement of preordained goals and a technical problem of management. Accordingly, knowledge can be broken down into discrete, measurable units and arranged hierarchically, in order to convert learning into observable outcomes. Borrowing from the methodology of the natural sciences and the discourse of scientific management in industry, a technical mode of rationality was seen as the right approach for efficiently organising teaching and learning in schools.

A second pressure was applied in the field of teacher education. Proponents of this view also claimed that inefficiency in education was the result of teacher incompetence and so teachers needed to be controlled and supervised by external

experts. One such proponent, William Bagley (1907, 1911), wrote that the “first rule of an efficient service” for the teacher is that of “unquestioned obedience”: an obedience which Bagley refers to as “intelligent loyalty” is necessary because “concentrated effort can be secured in no other way” (Bagley, 1907, p.265). Bagley further promoted the belief that efficiency could only be achieved through improvements in methods of teaching and that teachers should become acquainted with the most “economical and efficient methods” (op cit, p.252). There was a fear, also, that teachers who taught without careful supervision and expertly established goals would allow “bad and inadequate habits to be developed” in the young (Bagley, 1911, p.48). For Bagley, therefore, good teachers were equated with being public servants. They were “loyal” worked in a “concentrated” manner and accepted without question the demands of supervisors. The good teacher achieved “results” by providing an efficient and uniform educational experience for the young.

Embedded within this view is a model not only of the preferred teacher, but also of what constitutes a good teacher. At one level it is an argument which is hard to refute since certain demands of order, efficiency and favourable results should, of course, be expected of all institutions of learning. However if, as I have argued in chapter 2, the pedagogical relation lies at the heart of the practice of teaching and learning, then we stand in danger of losing the special meaning of this relationship if teachers become merely efficient functionaries dependent on external experts to specify how they should teach and even what to say to their students (Apple, 1986, p.132).

With the ascendancy of the culture of efficiency, new forms of control of teachers’ work have become mandated in policy decisions and practices, with the consequence that a technical rational language now permeates the teaching profession. Technocratic rationality is defined by its faith in the use of science and technology as the sole legitimate means of discovering truth and guiding process. Some critical theorists, however, argue against technocratic rationality because of its capacity to eliminate the distinction between our ethical-communicative or practical interests and our technical ones (Habermas, 1970). In eliminating that distinction, technical mindedness promotes a diminished meaning for the notion of human rationality. That meaning is embodied in science and technology’s interest in control, prediction and efficiency: a rationality Habermas calls “instrumental” (op cit, p.62). Under the grip

of instrumental rationality, education and social problems become merely technical issues to be resolved by instrumental means. The implication is that measurable performance becomes the only acceptable approach for evaluating the achievement of teachers and their students. Any alternative conceptions that resist this approach, particularly those of meaning, values and spirit are considered to be lacking any real substance and importance.

Technocratic rationality as an ideology means that a production model of efficiency becomes the standard that guides schools, restricting teaching to a technical activity concerned with the effective execution of objectives and measurement of student achievement. As teachers are put under more and more pressure to raise standards and improve performance, their ability to care for pupils becomes marginalised as students become included or excluded, valued or not, primarily on the basis of whether they contribute to the organisational performance of the school (Fielding, 2004, p.210).

Technocratic ideology has also had a pervasive influence on the curriculum form established for teachers. The National Curriculum not only delineates the educational issues that teachers can be concerned with, but promotes learning that is predetermined, sequential and ordered by performance standards that almost all students are expected to achieve. These standards are linked to centralised textbooks and redesigned assessments and enforced through systems of accountability monitoring that reward successful schools or threaten closure to those that persistently fall short. Conventional thinking only is encouraged as teachers are forced to conform to the expectations of “experts” and external theorists who design so-called “teacher proof” materials and procedures. The influence of expert systems in the modern world is one feature of what Giddens (1991, p.18) calls “disembedding mechanisms”. He means by this ‘the lifting out’ of social relations from local contexts and their re-articulation across indefinite tracts of time-space (op cit). According to Giddens one of the dangers of expert systems is that they bracket time and space through deploying modes of technical knowledge which have validity independent of the practitioners and clients who make use of them. Such an exclusive emphasis on pre-specified performance objectives and instructional outcomes produced by external “experts” neglects teaching as an engagement, argues Dunne

(2001, p.4-5). Since teachers and pupils are expected to relate externally to educational content they get no sense of the pedagogical relationship as setting up a field of psychic tension. Consequently teachers lose sight of those unplanned and subjective learning experiences that occur in pedagogical situations which cannot simply be made the object of analysis, but must be lived through (op cit, p.5).

Dunne's argument supports the findings of Lortie (1975) that many of the rewards of teaching are psychic in nature. They come from relationships with students, from seeing students change as a result of the teacher's own commitments and efforts. Lortie found that the psychic rewards of teaching fundamentally affected what teachers did as they adjusted their teaching to what they learnt about individual students.

Externally produced curricula and forms of pedagogy not only constrain teachers to act in conservative and routinised ways (Hargreaves, 1988), but provide little encouragement for them to view themselves as creators and originators of knowledge (Elbaz, 1981, 1983). Dewey, for example, was explicit about the importance of the private creative functions: in the concluding chapter of his *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1916, 1980) wrote:

*"Every new idea, every conception of things differing from that authorised by current belief, must have its origin in the individual. New ideas are doubtless always sprouting, but a society governed by custom does not encourage their development"* (op cit, p.305).

If Dewey is correct, then constraints of the kind I have discussed above are not only existentially harmful to teachers as private individuals but also deprive learners and the profession-as-a-whole of the creative and inventive qualities for ensuring the profession's vitality and openness to new ideas

A culture of efficiency, when fuelled by technocratic rationality, has important implications for the quality of the pedagogical relationship. Implicit in this view is that teacher/learner relations are mediated by a curriculum consisting of a series of pre-established and carefully sequenced tasks to be accomplished and tested. The



teacher's role becomes one of ensuring that learners are in the proper place within the sequence and that they receive the proper kind of treatment or learning experience which enables them to develop the desired knowledge, understanding and attitude. Learners who do not properly fit into such a sequence are identified as being in "need". This may be the case, particularly where the curriculum and assessment requirements that are imposed connect poorly with the needs and interests of such learners. As pupils become more focussed on achieving grades and working towards the next test situation, they are less likely to want to take "risks" in their learning. Without risks, their ideas remain unexpressed which means that zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, L. & Luria, A., 1994) are less likely to be revealed and explored.

Teachers, in their relationships with learners, have tended to become more businesslike as the quest for efficiency makes detailed personal knowledge of learner needs and interests secondary to achieving good test scores. Alongside this movement of standards-based reform has been a growing concern about the apparent disengagement of many students from their schooling. Several studies have analysed some of the negative and alienating effects of impersonal learning environments on student experience, particularly those most "at risk" of dropping out of school altogether (Schlosser, L., 1992; Pomeroy, E., 1999; Finn, J., 1989; Garner, P., 1995). In order to inform my discussion by including the perspectives of students, I provide, below, a review of two of these studies.

Schlosser (1992), in her study of the factors which increase the chances of culturally diverse students disengaging from school, sought answers to two questions which guided her study: "What lies behind the low achievement, defiance and general disregard for school typical of so-called marginal students? How can teachers help them learn?" Her data source draws on the school lives of 31 culturally diverse students who were identified by a secondary school as potential "dropouts".

Schlosser identified some of the main reasons why young adolescents disengage or become alienated from school. These are summarised as:

- i. *Lack of identification with school* – Identification is defined as an “internal state with two components, belonging and valuing, that increase students’ motivation to participate in school” (op cit, p.128; Finn, 1989).
- ii. *Low socioeconomic status* – Schlosser claims that when students come from backgrounds in which lower socioeconomic status and limited educational achievement are factors, identification becomes more difficult. Feelings of alienation that result may manifest themselves in non-participation, misbehaviour and poor achievement.
- iii. *Impersonal learning environments* – According to Schlosser, impersonal learning environments are one of the main causes of problematic behaviour among adolescents. At risk students are more likely to disengage from school when they believe that teachers are uninterested in them and that their opportunities for involvement and success are limited.
- iv. *Decline in academic motivation* – An important feature which was brought to light by the study was that the process of disengagement began long before students entered secondary school, but it reached its most critical phase among 13 and 14 year olds. “Thus the kinds of schools and teachers that students encounter at this stage in their learning becomes an important educational issue” (Schlosser, 1992, p.128). Schlosser suggests the decline in motivation in the middle years of secondary schooling is due to students’ emerging desires for self expression, identity and autonomy which fit poorly with the learning situations in which they find themselves. For example, they are more likely to encounter fewer opportunities to engage in decision-making, fewer personal and positive relationships with teachers and a greater emphasis on teacher control (op cit, p.129).

## **STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS**

When “at risk” students were asked to identify those features of the school which they liked or disliked, their relationships with teachers featured strongly in their responses. The main belief that students held about teachers were: 1) that teachers “don’t want to listen”; 2) that teachers “put them down”; 3) that there was a lack of respect shown by teachers generally. Such students also found it difficult to name a teacher they could go to for help, or a teacher who would listen to their problems (op cit, p.132).

At risk students also reported that they had fewer interactions with teachers generally, and felt that they were less likely than their more successful peers to receive the necessary feedback to improve their work. They made remarks such as “maybe if teachers would give a little respect to the kids, we would [respect them]” (op cit, p.132).

## **TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS AND CATEGORIES**

Schlosser also found that the teachers she spoke to held certain beliefs about “at risk” students. Most teachers perceived these students to be the ones most likely to “hide” from classroom interaction. On the basis of their responses to two questions: 1) How much responsibility for learning should be required of young adolescents; 2) How much personal distance should be maintained between teachers and students? Schlosser organised teachers into three categories: *low impact*, *medium impact* and *high impact* teachers.

*Low impact* - Teachers were placed in this category when they perceived that they were having little or no impact on the achievement of “at risk” students. They were more likely to believe that whether these students made improvements or not was related to factors outside their control, such as home background, and socioeconomic factors. The majority blamed parents for students’ failure: a distinguishing feature of such teachers was the distance they maintained between themselves and students (op cit, p.135). They tended to use distancing behaviours to convey their responsibility and maintain control. Examples of behaviours used excessively were: 1) engaging in public acts intended to convey an impression of authority; 2) writing referrals or sending students from the room; 3) making examples of specific students in front of their peers.

Schlosser concluded that low impact teachers were unwilling to recognise the effect that their distancing behaviours were having on students “at risk”, consequently they had little or no impact on the motivation and achievement of such students (op cit, p.135).

*Medium impact* – These teachers reported that they were having moderate success with “at risk” students, but only in terms of teaching strategies. Like low impact

teachers they attributed student problems to poor home backgrounds, bad attitudes and the lack of a desire to succeed. Unlike low impact teachers, however, they had some awareness of the developmental needs of young adolescents. For these teachers, helping students to develop sound work habits and making teaching expectations explicit were keys to their ability to make academic improvements with students (op cit, p.136).

*High impact* – Teachers were placed in this category because they were achieving the greatest success with “at risk” students. Most held beliefs that creating warm, personal learning environments in their classrooms was important for getting to know their students. They were more likely to take specific steps to understand students’ cultural backgrounds and individual needs. In addition to building closer relationships with their students, they also encouraged and facilitated good relationships between students and their peers:

*“These teachers recognised that young adolescents in general, and [at risk] students in particular require both structure and independence in the classroom. They encouraged personal relationships, connecting students’ outside lives with classroom curriculum and are effective at making the rules and procedures that govern classroom life explicit” (op cit, p.138).*

Data from this study indicates that the quality of the pedagogical relationship and willingness on the part of teachers to develop personalised learning environments had the greatest impact on the engagement and motivation of “at risk” students (op cit, p.138). However, for personalised learning environments to have the power to motivate all students, organisational change alone, such as developing team work and student advisory programmes are not sufficient. Two further types of teacher knowledge are required: generic knowledge about the home lives and cultural backgrounds of students and knowledge about the impact of the developmental needs of young adolescents on their learning (Schlosser, 1992, p.129).

A second study which features the perception of “at risk” students as a central focus is Pomeroy’s (1999) analysis of excluded students’ perceptions of their educational experience. The study is based on the accounts of thirty-three adolescents all

permanently excluded from their schools and attending a behaviour support centre. It considers the perceptions of these students on the teacher qualities that either fostered or hindered the development of positive relations. Pomeroy develops her argument from the standpoint that, as recipients of policy-in-practice, students possess a knowledge of the educational system which is not known by teachers, parents and policy makers. In order to fully understand an educational phenomenon such as exclusion, it is important to construct this understanding from all relevant perspectives. Too often the viewpoints of students remain unheard (op cit, p.466).

### **STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS**

Pomeroy found that excluded students identified the pedagogical relationship as one of the most salient features of their school experience. Students identified three main teacher behaviour patterns that they found to be antagonistic and humiliating to them as persons: 1) "shouting" and telling students to "shut up"; 2) responding sarcastically when asked a question and putting down young people; 3) name calling. These actions were often perceived to communicate a message to students that they were not being valued as learners and, often, that they were not liked as individuals (op cit, p.469). The most consistent and common grievance, however, was that teachers did not *listen* to students. Pomeroy found two basis upon which teachers' "not listening" to students was deemed inappropriate. First, when it was interpreted as, or results in, teachers failing to meet young people's social and emotional needs and second, when it resulted in students' perceptions of differential treatment based on race.

In contrast to the perceptions of negative qualities above, Pomeroy found that the majority of her sample of excluded students also spoke of the positive qualities possessed by some of their teachers. Students liked teachers who: a) take the time to talk to them and listen to their views; b) have a friendly approach and sense of humour whilst also demonstrating care and concern; c) have the ability to effectively impart knowledge and skills by making an effort to teach in an interesting way; d) show willingness to provide students with the help and attention they need to learn. Pomeroy adds that students believe learning to be a valuable activity and teachers' failure to facilitate learning is largely what is being criticised.

## MODEL OF TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Pomeroy used her analysis of students' experiences and accounts to construct a proposed model of qualities, interactions and behaviours which promote ideal pedagogical relations between teachers and students "at risk" of exclusion. The main themes are as follows:

*Feeling cared for* – It is important for students to feel cared for; however, the *in loco parentis* model of care is not seen as appropriate. Students in their final years of schooling do not wish for teachers to act as surrogate parents. Rather, they want a unique relationship in which their non-child status is recognised and responded to accordingly. Teachers must communicate "caring" through dialogue without inadvertently "parenting".

*Giving clear explanations* – Students value teachers who take the trouble to explain things to them. They are interested in the perspective of teachers insofar as that perspective offers guidance to behaviour.

*Respectful interactions* – Students appreciate when teachers communicate a belief in their worth. The current system, as it is in operation, serves to infantilise young adults (op cit, p.478).

Pomeroy concludes that the difference which exists between students' descriptions of their negative experiences at school and their ideal-model of teacher-student relations is the difference between the way things are and the way things could be. That is, discarding behaviour viewed as antagonistic and increasing the amount of teacher behaviours perceived as "caring" and "helpful". Students' accounts also suggest that the relationship becomes most inappropriate in the final years of schooling, when students find themselves still being treated like children rather than young adults.

Each of these studies suggests that when technocratic rationality is allowed to strip the pedagogical relation of its moral and personal dimensions some students, especially those who are most at risk, begin to regard teachers as impersonal and dismissive and schools as unwelcome places.

We can summarise the main constraints to spirit implicit in the dominant discourse of technocratic rationality as follows:

1. Technocratic rationality focuses on efficiency gains and the control of teachers' work through a mandated curriculum pre-specified by external experts. The result is that through rationalising and objectifying the process of teaching, the *I/It* attitude predominates.

In contrast, spirit in pedagogical relations lays greater stress on the quality of the relationship between teacher and learner. Specifically, it explores alternative ways this relationship can be developed morally, ethically and personally in challenging school contexts. Since the *I/It* relation predominates, the teacher must exert a countervailing influence to promote the importance of human encounter and genuine relationship.

2. Surrounded by a multitude of curriculum contents, teachers are in danger of internalising the messages specified by people who are external to their immediate situations. As a consequence, relationships are less important as teachers make do with simply following the centralised curriculum and assessment guides.

Spirit in pedagogical relations recognises that it is possible for teachers to learn all the techniques of teaching and instruction, but still remain pedagogically limited in their knowledge and understanding of how to forge productive relations with students. They need a richer framework, therefore, consisting of qualities and practices for reflection and action that more accurately capture the pedagogical responsibilities they have towards students. Teachers may need to understand that teaching is also a relation and not merely an instrumental act which can be pre-specified through centralised forms of curriculum materials.

3. The taken-for-granted instrumental reasoning which is built into the dominant discourse on teaching omits the fact, that no matter how well planned a curriculum package or scheme of work may be, teacher and students come together in anticipation of an encounter whose outcome cannot be predicted beforehand. It cannot account for instances when the teacher who, in her concrete relations with

particular students, finds the content of her teaching deeply questioned by the passion of student opinion, or conversely by indifference to a point of view.

Spirit in pedagogical relations acknowledges that such uncertainty in interactions between teachers and students is not only inevitable but carries serious ethical weight. This is because such interactions require a quality of response and responsibility that is rooted in shifting social relations. Although guidelines are unavoidable mere rule alone cannot assume genuine encounter or ethical non-violent relations.

4. In the discussion of “at risk” students, I maintained that one of the effects of the current drive for efficiency and measurable outcomes is that teachers are being forced to become more impersonal and businesslike in their dealings with students. Such distancing between teachers and students causes alienation and may lead to “at risk” students disengaging from school altogether because they feel that they cannot achieve a sense of relation with their teachers.

Spirit in pedagogical relations acknowledges the negative impact that the objectifying *I/It* attitude has on “at risk” students but views this as an opportunity for teachers to become receptive to what is being unpredictably returned to them from students. When a teacher claims to know better than the student what the latter wants, even guided by the most altruistic motives, this is not a dialogical relation of inclusion. It is the uniqueness of each student that exists beyond his or her institutional position as student which the teacher must defend. For example, we can compare the analytical and detached glance of a businesslike teacher which observes and judges with the glance that establishes contact and searches for pedagogic understanding in a dialogue with students. The glance which only observes the behaviour of pupils objectifies, whereas the glance inspired by spirit makes educative relationships possible.

5. As more and more of teachers’ control of the curriculum has become dictated by external experts, the skills that teachers traditionally used and deemed valuable for achieving the psychic rewards of teaching have been ignored.

In contrast, spirit in pedagogical relation is a call for teachers to rediscover and access those personal qualities of spirit which support them in reshaping curricular and



organisational structures in order to make pedagogical relations possible. Conditions favourable to the rooting of genuine encounter will have to be intentionally created and maintained.

Finally, spirit inserts itself between the two poles of the debate, between the meaning of teaching as a vocation and as an instrumental instruction. On the one hand, it recognises that teachers cannot escape their role – they are required to ensure that students make symbolic attachments and meaning out of the mandated curriculum. On the other hand, spirit recognises that there are certain elements of the pedagogical relation which current educational theories, models and methods of teaching have been unwilling to address and which grant a special quality to the world of the teacher and student. With this recognition spirit inspires the possibility of teachers acting intentionally to strengthen the relational possibilities of teaching and classroom practice.

To summarise: in this chapter I have looked at the ascendancy of the dominant technical mode of rationality in teaching from its roots in the public service ideal to its pervasive influence on the curriculum form established for teachers. I have asserted that teachers are being constrained to teach and relate to students in pre-specified ways, and to adopt pedagogical identities which are impersonal and businesslike as the quest for efficiency diminishes an emphasis on engagement and relationship. The effect this is having on the disengagement of students from their schooling was also considered with particular reference to two studies which affirm the importance of the pedagogical relationship for increasing the chances of culturally diverse students and students at risk of exclusion.

The chapter concluded with a discussion of six constraints to spirit implicit in the dominant technical rational discourse of teaching together with some ideas of how we may begin the process of reconstructing spirit in pedagogy in the light of the constraints identified.

The next chapter continues the discussion with an emphasis on the intensification of the labour process of teaching, particularly the effects that bureaucratically – driven time pressures are having on teachers' workloads and emotional well-being.

## CHAPTER 6

### INTENSIFICATION OF TEACHERS' WORK

In the previous chapter I discussed how the culture of efficiency within the discourse of teaching has succeeded in ensuring that a technical-rational language permeates the teaching profession. My intention in this chapter is to focus on the worrying concerns around the intensification of teachers' work as this ideal has become embedded in schools. The chapter starts by distinguishing between the meaning of technical rational time and the more favoured subjective time among teachers and compares their effects, particularly on the way that the pedagogical relationship can be developed. Using a framework consisting of three actions some of the consequences of increased workloads on teachers' sense of loss and guilt are explored along with the added dimension that a focus on spirit can bring for moving beyond guilt. The chapter concludes with current research which seems to suggest that, despite the pressures and emotional turmoil, many teachers are choosing to be eclectic and pragmatic in the philosophies and practices they use to achieve preferred pedagogical identities.

#### TECHNICAL RATIONAL AND SUBJECTIVE DIMENSIONS OF TIME

Whilst the public service and technocratic ideals in teaching have been premised on the perceived need to eradicate teacher inefficiency through external controls on how teachers carry out their work, more far-reaching constraints have resulted as these two ideals have become embedded in the structure of schools. Brann (1979) describes an ideology as a system of ideas, beliefs, thoughts, that is closed to further questioning. Bullough et al. (1984) further argue that ideologies "imbue the unconscious presuppositions (or pre-understandings) we have about the world. Pre-understandings are given by our immediate sociality – family, socioeconomic class – and by our language, providing us the values and meanings we take as natural" (op cit, p.350-351).

We see these views reflected in the technocratic ideology, where even time becomes a finite resource to be efficiently organised, as Hargreaves (1994) observes:

*"Within the technical-rational dimension of time, time is a finite resource or means which can be increased, decreased, managed organised or*

*reorganised in order to accommodate selected educational purposes ... Time in such a view is an objective variable, an instrumental, organisational condition that can be managerially manipulated in order to foster the implementation of educational changes whose purpose and desirability have been determined elsewhere” (op cit, p.96).*

Driven by concerns for productivity, accountability and control over what teachers do, administrators in schools are exerting tighter controls over how teachers spend their time in order to rationalise it and, in the interests of efficiency, eliminate any perceived wastage. Time becomes broken down into small, discrete components with clearly designated objectives assigned to each one; for example, preparation time, planning time, group time, non-contact time and directed time are symbolic of this shift. This administrative tendency in the definition and control of time is rooted in a monochromic world of functional relations, geared to instrumental purposes and the exertion of control and surveillance. It is a time perspective which is divorced from the classroom-based polychromic or subjective time perspectives of many teachers. Hargreaves (1994) describes subjective time as follows:

*“ ... [subjective time] resides not in the constitution of time itself, but runs alongside and is at variance with the ordered, linear schedules of objective time. We might call this the phenomenological dimension of time. It is one where time is subjective, where time is lived, where time has an inner duration which varies from person to person” (op cit, p.100).*

Subjective time, for the teacher, yields time to reflect on what is needed in a given situation - time for team building, nurturing friendships and co-operative group work seen as valuable in fostering tolerance to cultural diversity. Also time to play with various permutations and combinations of ideas for developing new teaching activities or devising new ways of becoming a genuine presence for students. Subjective time, therefore, requires a degree of freedom for teachers to exercise their minds in creative and inventive ways.

In contrast, what we are witnessing is a bureaucratically-driven escalation of time pressures being placed on teachers by administrators, together with a proliferation of

administrative tasks and the lengthening of teachers' working day. In effect, there has been an intensification of the labour process of teaching (Hargreaves and Tucker, 1991; Apple and Jungck, 1992). One of the obvious consequences of increased workloads is that teachers are being left with little time to develop the pedagogical relationship beyond ensuring that students are covering the prescribed content and improving test scores. Control has shifted so far from teachers to "system" that guilt has become a central emotional preoccupation for many teachers. Hargreaves and Tucker (1991), distinguish two types of guilt in teachers they have studied, persecutory and depressive guilt.

Persecutory guilt is a kind of guilt which leads some teachers to display overt yet superficial compliance with the status quo for fear of prejudicing test scores for which they will ultimately be held accountable. For these teachers, to confess or confide personal difficulties is in many cases to betray signs of incompetence, inadequacy and unsuitability. Becoming "reformed" to the dominant discourse of technocratic rationality, they not only become businesslike in their interactions with others, students and colleagues alike, but also become locked in a pursuit for professional perfectionism that has no public flaw (op cit, p.501).

Depressive guilt, on the other hand, occurs when teachers feel that they are harming or neglecting those for whom they care, by not meeting their needs or by not giving them sufficient attention. When teachers feel that they have no time to "hear a child's problem, nor patience to listen to their faltering thoughts..." (Hargreaves and Tucker, p.495).

These two forms of guilt suggest students are being exposed to two types of teacher identities in schools in the current climate: one a "reformed teacher", primarily orientated towards compliance with the dominant technocratic discourse and who feels persecutory guilt for falling short of performance expectations, or failing to do something that is expected by one or more external authorities; the other is the teacher who feels depressive guilt due to feelings that they may be neglecting those for whom they care by not fully meeting their needs, or by not giving them sufficient attention.

For some writers, the issue of depressive guilt, and how one deals with it, is not just a psychological question but also a philosophical question of moral choice. Rawls (1971) for instance, describes guilt as a moral emotion which is felt when we recognise that we are doing harm to others. The definition of guilt in moral terms places a heavy burden of responsibility on teachers to care in a wider sense which carries with it social and moral responsibilities as well as interpersonal ones. In the field of nursing, for example, Watson (1988) makes clearer this distinction between care in the narrower and care in the wider social and moral sense when he writes:

*“Human caring in nursing...is not just an emotion, concern, attitude, or benevolent desire. Caring is the moral ideal of nursing whereby the end is protection, enhancement and preservation of human dignity. Human caring involves values, a will and a commitment to care, knowledge, caring actions and consequences”* (op cit, p.29).

Other writers have concentrated their efforts on the lasting emotional damage which can result when feelings of guilt are allowed to persist and develop into stress. Woods and Carlyle (2002), draw attention to the painful process of an identity passage which teachers go through in order to reconstruct new identities. Similarly, Ball (2003) points to the profound feelings of demoralisation that teachers experienced which caused them to have doubts about their agency and dignity.

A focus on spirit, however, brings the added dimension of discovering one's *voice of conscience* and the opportunity this affords for *self illumination*. This important emphasis on spirit, as a deeper ground of being from where the ultimate imperatives for action emanate, is in line with what Buber describes as “the greater conscience” in his writings on Guilt and Guilty feelings (Buber, 1966) and also akin to Tillich's moral absolute which I drew attention to in Part 1, chapter 1).

Buber distinguishes between the existential guilt, which derives from a failure to honour one's relationship to others, from what he calls “play on the surface conscience” which is used and worn out without the person ever exploring the depths of their personal self consciousness in order to understand the source of their guilty feelings. I suggest that we see this latter form of guilt being displayed by teachers

who use their feelings of persecutory guilt to lock themselves into the drive for professional perfectionism with its consequent distancing of their students. Depressive guilt however, which leads to self illumination, stems from a sense of responsibility in the teacher's being. Where there is responsibility, Buber (1966, p.132) writes, there is also guilt, the guilty sense of a failure to respond with one's whole being:

*"For this summoning of a greater conscience is needed, one that has become wholly personal, one that does not shy away from the glance into the depths ... This conscience is possessed in every simple man who gathers himself into himself in order to venture the breakthrough out of the entanglement of guilt. And it is a great, not yet sufficiently recognised task of education to elevate the conscience from its lower common form to conscience-vision and conscience-courage. For it is innate to the conscience of man that it can elevate itself" (op cit, p.135).*

It is through self illumination of one's guilt that one can recognise the inspiration of spirit which helps to move one through the guilt towards new ways of seeing and acting in a given situation.

## **NEW MOVES TOWARDS TEACHER-LED RECONSTRUCTIONS**

There are indications in the current educational literature that, despite the pressures and emotional turmoil, rather than feeling crushed many teachers are becoming more conscious and deliberate in their choice of philosophies and practices which sit more comfortably within their consciences and help them to achieve preferred identities. Moore et al (2002) found this to be the case in their empirical study which explored the ways in which teachers as active agents were positioning themselves in the face of extensive educational change. Their study found that although few teachers were willing openly to declare themselves as either wholesale supporters or rejecters of central government reforms, almost all were willing to talk, instead, of ways they were modifying current practice by making selections and re-selections from a range of educational practices and traditions (op cit, p.252).

Rejecting such terms as ‘compliance’ and ‘resistance’ to describe this new attitude among teachers the authors use the terms eclectic and pragmatic instead, to better capture the complex variety of teacher positionings being described. Whereas *eclecticism* describes the way in which some teachers are making choices from a wide range of educational traditions, philosophies, theories and practices available to them, the term *pragmatism* is used in this context to define the reasons and motivations behind the different eclectic selections that teachers are making.

In their thinking about teacher eclecticism and pragmatism, Moore et al used these two terms to develop two distinct forms of pragmatism which, they argue, signifies the ways in which teachers are strengthening and affirming their pedagogical identities. They refer to these two forms as *principled pragmatism* and *contingent pragmatism*. Principled pragmatism occurs when teachers feel generally positive towards recent reforms but also able to strengthen and affirm their pedagogic identities by drawing eclectically on a variety of educational practices and traditions. Contingent pragmatism, on the other hand, is adopted by teachers in oppositional orientation to reform whereby enforced reactions to policy change take on the form of a survival strategy. In sum what this study suggests is that, in addition to the teacher identity which is “reformed” wholeheartedly in its pursuit of implementing the dominant technocratic discourse at all costs, two other important distinctions can be made in the way that teachers are choosing preferred pedagogical identities. There appears to be a second category of teacher identities consisting of teachers who feel free and able – however illusory that freedom and ability might be – to make choices on the basis of a variety of practices which are open to them in order to respond to the problems and issues they encounter in their specific school contexts. The third category of teacher identities consists of teachers who, although remaining uncertain about what to do for the best, might be willing to consider compromises if convinced that to do so would make a significant difference to their practice.

The point about eclecticism and pragmatism that is important for this study is what it signifies; that there are teachers willing to consider, even in the face of mounting pressures, alternative pedagogical discourses, particularly if they help support what works for them in their particular contexts.

In the next chapter we step into the world of two such teachers who have chosen to affirm the importance of relationships through a re-construction of spirit in pedagogical relations as a preferred practice over and against the requirements of the impersonal system.



## PART 3

### RECONSTRUCTING SPIRIT IN PEDAGOGY

This final part brings up-to-date the study of spirit in pedagogical relations through an investigation of this theme in the case studies of two experienced teachers. The case studies reveal some of the problematic issues and themes of relationship encountered by these teachers in their daily realities in schools. Representing *pedagogies of spirit*, they serve to develop and extend our understanding of how spirit can be “embodied” practically in pedagogical relations, the curriculum and through new school structures.

Part 3 is organised into three chapters, as follows:

Chapter 7      Describes a research design which utilizes the tools of interview and a dialogic encounter informed by the ideas of Martin Buber, David Bohm and Hans-Georg Gadamer. The case study participants are introduced, together with the steps leading up to the dialogue

Chapter 8      Case study of Sarah – presents three main story themes which capture Sarah’s experience of those pedagogical relationships that hold particular significance for her as a teacher and learner. These are:

- i.     Teacher as a significant role model
- ii.    The Breakfast Club Community
- iii.   Face-to-face conflict

The case will highlight how knowledge of the possibilities for spirit in relationships and pedagogical structures was extended through dialogue which enabled the co-construction of a shared set of meanings and a “fusion of horizons”. Of particular interest in this case also is the development of a six-step profile of *Teacher-as-Rescuer*. This builds experiential links with Levinas’s ethics of Other-centredness and identifies the experiences and behaviours that characterise the actions of a rescuer in the ethical relation.

Chapter 9      Case study of Bethany – reveals the themes of:

- i. Cultural influences and authority relations
- ii. Student positioning in relation to “others”
- iii. Student resistance and loss of respected authority

This case charts the different cultural influences and professional challenges which led Bethany to a rediscovery of her talent as a storyteller, as one of the ways she is bringing spirit into her experience of the pedagogical relationship. Particular attention is given to how the possibilities for spirit and new relationships can be enhanced through engaging the content of the curriculum with specific issues that are important for students. A key feature illustrated in this case is the development of a framework, consisting of five action steps, for enriching the citizenship curriculum.

The discussions provided in the two cases will make explicit links to the wider theoretical and philosophical perspectives presented in the earlier chapters of the thesis.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations:

A final section draws together the main findings of the case studies and suggests four ways that the continued reconstruction of pedagogies of spirit can be approached in the development of teacher education programmes.

## CHAPTER 7

### TWO EMPIRICAL EXEMPLIFICATIONS

What follows is not a report of conventional scientific enquiry, as commonly understood, though aspects of the latter's stratagems and protocols for collecting and analysing data interpenetrate the narrative. What follows is rather an attempt to exemplify empirically and methodologically how "spirit" might be embodied in actual pedagogic relations, utilising a form of enquiry that is itself infused with spirit characteristics, most notably the principle of the dialogic encounter.

Before attending to the steps which led up to the dialogue it is necessary to clarify two points regarding the approach to enquiry I have chosen. First, I am not seeking to generalise, nor to be representative, nor to disconfirm or confirm hypotheses, which are the hallmarks of social scientific investigations. Rather, my intention is to illustrate and vivify particular aspects of spirit, and highlight their relevance for a renewed pedagogy of relations, as identified in my study so far.

These aspects include:

- The importance of the *in-between* of relations, or what is happening between teacher and pupil in classroom encounters that suggest the presence or absence of spirit.
- The manner in which spirit brings into focus the idea of pupils as radical *Others*, including the place of the *ethical relation* in face-to-face pedagogical encounters.
- The way spirit motivates renewed action, through agency and intention, in classroom and other school contexts, to create new structures based on the principles of *community* and *person-centred approaches* to teaching and learning.

Second, the two empirical exemplifications which feature in this chapter are presented as narrative constructions which, like any good story: (1) capture teachers' conceptions and experiences of pedagogical relationships; (2) exemplify particular aspects of spirit in these relationships; and (3) show some of the problems that may arise when pedagogical relationships do not exemplify spirit.

In order to enliven the different constructions, configure meaning and engage the reader, I have used three narrative devices in the exemplifications which follow: these are; *anecdotes*, *vignettes* and *story layering* (Ely et al, 1997; Van Manen, 1990; Miles, 1990). The specific stories that teachers tell about their pedagogical relationships are presented in the cases as *anecdotes*. As a narrative form anecdotes are stories, but they are also something more (Ely et al 1997, p.65). They enliven a story by giving a sense of the sequence of events which led up to a particularly memorable experience for the narrator. By their very particularity anecdotes are used to help the reader through the different scenes of a larger drama (op cit, p.69).

The second kind of narrative device which has been utilised in the cases is the vignette, of which there are two main types, *embedded* and *moving vignettes* (Ely et al, 1997; Miles, 1990). Embedded vignettes are “compact sketches used to introduce characters, foreshadow events and analysis to come, highlight particular findings or summarise a particular theme or issue in analysis and interpretation” (Ely et al, 1997, p.70). Moving vignettes, on the other hand, are used to compress aspects of an experience (which in reality occurred over a long period of time), in order to provide an array of its evolving features (op cit, p.74).

Embedded vignettes are found throughout my stories. For example, they are used at the start of each one to introduce and create a portrait of the two teacher participants. They provide the reader with a feel of who the teachers are, what they believe in and value as persons and as members of the larger school community. Embedded vignettes are also used to summarise particular themes, provide interpretations and foreshadow new themes to follow. An example of a moving vignette is particularly featured in the first case, where Sarah recalls the circumstances leading to the development of the Breakfast Club in her school. A moving vignette is created by her as she weaves the account of the actions, feelings, thoughts and explanations of the narrator and those of the people who took part. The reader therefore gets a condensed, but vivid and detailed, insight into the different parts of this experience.

The third and final kind of narrative device used is the *layering of stories*. Stories can be layered in such a way as to show the complexity of the different influences on a

person's interpretation of experience, in order to reveal the dynamics of a larger narrative (Ely et al, 1997, p.80). For example, in the story about Bethany, the reader is given an opportunity to penetrate the complex dimensions of church and school influences on her experience. Other story layers provide the reader with information about what is happening among different ethnic groups in her school and Bethany's perspectives on the impact that teaching the citizenship curriculum is having on her ability to forge productive relationships with her students. Juxtaposed between these different story layers are additional ones, providing a commentary on the relations of the different parts of her account to each other. Layered stories, therefore, have the effect of showing a person's creative and active interpretation of their experience (op cit, p.95).

In the remaining sections below, I describe the steps taken to obtain informed consent from the teachers involved in my enquiry, including the steps which lead to our dialogue.

## **TEACHER PARTICIPANTS**

The first step was making contact with potential participants by sending a formal letter to schools. I decided to send the letter to a selected number of schools with which I was familiar in my role as an LEA Advisor. I felt that being known to these schools, albeit in a different capacity, would make teachers more willing to consider taking part in the research. In response to my letter I received a total of ten inquiries from teachers asking for further details on what their involvement would mean in terms of time and contribution. Eight of these teachers were RE specialists, one an English and the other a Maths specialist. In response to the teachers' request for further information, I informed them that the most important criteria for taking part are interest in the topic and willingness to commit the time necessary to take part in interviews and conversations related to the topic. It is interesting to note that on the basis of this information only two RE teachers, Sarah and Bethany (pseudonyms), expressed an interest in becoming participants and contacted me so that we could arrange a mutually convenient time for a meeting. The other eight teachers, although interested in the topic of research, were reluctant to commit themselves further due to perceived time pressures, unless funding could be provided for timetable cover. Nonetheless, I decided to forge ahead with the two committed participants as I felt

that between them they had gained a wealth of practical experience in their different teaching roles.

In addition to being RE teachers, both Sarah and Bethany held senior positions in their respective schools. Sarah was working in an all boys inner city Secondary School. At the time of the interviews she had been in the teaching profession for eight years and her present school was the fourth in which she had taught. She had been a Head of Department in a previous school and had been in her present school for two years. In addition to her senior management role, as an Assistant Headteacher, Sarah was in charge of RE and the development of Citizenship in the school. Bethany, the second participant, also held the position of Assistant Headteacher in a large mixed, inner city Comprehensive school. She had been in the teaching profession for twenty years, and had been at her present school for thirteen years. Bethany too was in charge of RE in the school and also taught Humanities and Citizenship. She had recently been promoted to her present senior position after being a Head of Department for many years.

## **THE INTERVIEW**

This step of the process was used to give participants an opportunity to talk about their perceptions and practical experience of the pedagogical relationship prior to our dialogue. Before arranging to interview Sarah and Bethany individually I prepared a semi-structured interview schedule consisting of five questions (Appendix 1). The interview questions consisted of two parts. The first part contained open-ended questions designed to obtain background information about participants' teaching experience. The second part of the schedule focused participants' attention on specific experiences of the pedagogical relationship they wished to reveal and share. Semi-structured interviewing was used because it offered a clear focus and also allowed for modifications and alterations to be incorporated into the questioning procedure. Rigid, highly inflexible interview questions, or a tightly structured questionnaire, were considered inappropriate because the objective of interview was to acquire detailed information about teachers' views and perceptions which were grounded in concrete experience. One of the major strengths of using semi-structured interviewing is that it enables the researcher to adapt to the ebb and flow of the

interview situation in order to pursue a point which may not have been anticipated prior to questioning and, in this respect, additional data may be acquired.

During the interviews I listened carefully and with an open mind to participants' responses to the questions. When necessary I used well placed prompts to extract more data or to clarify certain points. For example, "Can you explain this in more detail?" "What do you mean by...?" (Oerter, et al, 1996, p.43-7). I interviewed Sarah and Bethany separately and in each case, the interview lasted for a period of two and a half hours. The interviews were audio-recorded (Heritage, 1984) which afforded me repeated access to participants' responses.

From the recording I produced a written version of the interview which remained faithful to the original language and flow of what was said (McCracken, 1988; Patton, 1990; Poland, 1995). I proceeded to analyse the transcribed text in two stages. First I read and re-read the text, recording my initial thoughts in a margin. These notes simply recorded issues I found interesting and wanted to reflect on. Following a series of careful readings of the transcripts I realised that both Sarah and Bethany were using stories as explanations and illustrations of their experiences of significant pedagogic relations. According to Labov and Waletzky (1967), the communicative intent of a story is to recount an event, or set of events, that actually happened. It is a way of solving the problem of how to translate knowing into telling (White, 1981) and so stories provide a linguistic form in which human experience as actions and as lived can be expressed, as Polkinghorne (1995) explains:

*"A story is a special type of discourse production. In a story, events and actions are drawn together into an organised whole by means of a plot. A plot is a type of conceptual scheme by which a contextual meaning of individual events can be displayed. To illustrate the operation of emplotment, I will use a simple story. "The king died; the prince cried". In isolation the two events are simply propositions describing two independent happenings. When composed into a story, a new level of relational significance appears. The relational significance is a display of the meaning-producing operation of the plot. Within a storied production, the prince's crying appears as a response to his father's death. The story*

*provides the context for understanding the crying*” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.7).

As this passage suggests, storied memories retain the complexity of the situation in which an action was undertaken and the emotional and motivational meaning connected with it (op cit, p.11). Mishler (1986), commenting on research interviewing, has suggested that researchers need to hear teacher’s stories and invite them to collaborate in order to understand what the stories are about.

When reading the stories I used Labov and Waletzky’s model of story structure to identify elementary units of the narrative structure which could be viewed as answers to implicit questions which listeners might ask on hearing or reading a story. These have been summarised by Cortazzi, 1993, p.45) as:

1. *Abstract* – What was this story about?
2. *Orientation* – Who, what, where, when?
3. *Complication* – What were the problems, then what happened?
4. *Evaluation* – What appears to be the point of the story, so what?
5. *Result* – What were the different outcomes?
6. *Denouement or Coda* – Tying back to present situation

During the process I made notes of the stories, or parts of stories, which I felt needed further elaboration in order to satisfy each of the five questions above. I also segmented each story and any small data bits related to each, into organising themes which I displayed on tables (see Appendix 2). Displayed in this way I could begin to think about the different themes in terms of a “narrative whole”. I then sent two copies of the transcribed text to participants. One copy contained the full text of the interview; the second copy highlighted the stories and suggested themes. I did this to provide participants with an opportunity to check for any inaccuracies or add any further thoughts generated from reading the two texts.

## **THE DIALOGIC ENCOUNTER**

Our approach to dialogue was informed by ideas derived from Martin Buber, David Bohm and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Buber (1967) recognised three types of dialogue:



(1) the genuine or *I/Thou* dialogue, in which a mutual relationship grows; (2) *technical* dialogue, in which there is the goal of achieving objective understanding; and (3) *monologue*, in which one is more interested in self than in the relationship. For Buber, the spirit of the dialogue is derived from the “between” where there is a genuine experience of the other person as a *Thou* which facilitates the complete engagement of what is there to be discovered. Bohm’s (1991) contribution to dialogue is that it brings us face to face with a paradox which must remain “unresolved”, which is that we conceive of ourselves as individuals but only realise ourselves in concert with others. Working on this paradox opens a larger consciousness and a new mind, in short, the ability to hold many points of view in suspension whilst gradually creating a shared set of meanings through a common thinking process. Gadamer (1962) argues that the creation of a common meaning should lead to a “fusion of horizons” where a horizon consists of the prejudices which one brings to a dialogue. For this fused horizon to occur participants to a dialogue must be willing to listen to each other’s arguments, allow their prejudices to be questioned and remain open to being persuaded that the other’s contributions may enrich one’s own (op cit, p.346, 349).

In order to lay down a secure basis for our dialogue and to ensure that it had a definite purpose and would succeed (Robinson, 1995; Gurevitch, 1986), we identified and agreed three topic areas that the dialogue would cover. In addition, we acknowledged the need to remain open to any new insights which emerged naturally as the dialogue developed. The three topic areas were as follows:

1. To share any further points of information which we felt were needed to clarify the story themes.
2. After a preliminary discussion of spirit in pedagogical relations based on my theorising, to determine to what extent this made sense to what participants were trying to reveal through telling their stories.
3. To determine those new qualities of spirit which participants wished to bring to the task re-inventing, or redefining, problematic relationships with pupils in light of the themes and issues that had been identified.

## COMMUNICATIVE COMMITMENTS

To maximise the chances of achieving understanding and the spirit of a “between” we formulated a list of six “*communicative commitments*” similar to what Burbules (1993) refers to as communicative virtues. These were compiled to support and sustain our level of involvement. These were:

- i. To talk about what is really important to us in terms of the stories and topics we have agreed
- ii. Really listen to each other both thoughtfully and attentively
- iii. See how thoroughly we can understand each other’s views and experience
- iv. Say what is true to us without making the other wrong
- v. See what we can understand and learn together
- vi. Trusting the process

Agreement was then reached with each participant separately that the dialogue would extend over three meetings, each occasion lasting for a period of two and a half hours to ensure a thorough exploration of each of the topic areas – with the flexibility of making adjustments as the dialogue proceeded. In each case a quiet venue was chosen for the dialogue to minimise the risk of interruptions, which participants felt were more likely to occur if the meetings were held in their respective schools. Throughout the whole process I kept in touch with Sarah and Bethany on an informal basis for the purposes of answering any questions or concerns, or adding any further insights to our interpretations.

## PEDAGOGIES OF SPIRIT: TWO CASE STUDIES

In the following two chapters I present the outcomes of our dialogue in the case studies of Sarah and Bethany respectively. They identify the themes and stories which were significant for each participant’s experience and also show how we co-constructed and extended our knowledge and vocabulary of spirit in pedagogical relations. To ensure that the voices of participants are not lost, I have fully quoted their stories in order to represent them in their own terms. Since the understanding and interpretations of these stories came from our dialogue I have arranged the details into a narrative format in order to impose “order upon the chaos of experience”

(McNay, 1999, p.319). Where necessary, I have also supported our interpretations by drawing on the wider theoretical and philosophical perspectives presented in the earlier chapters. In a final concluding section consideration will be given to the questions and issues raised by case studies and their implications for the continued reconstruction of spirit in teacher education programmes.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CASE STUDY OF SARAH**

#### **ENGAGING SARAH**

Sarah has been in the teaching profession for eight years and has risen quickly through the ranks, securing a senior position as Assistant Head by the age of thirty. She made the decision to become a participant in the research because she believed in the reality of the spirit, particularly in its power to heal and to influence the process of change in social reality. She also saw participation as an opportunity for her to reflect on where she was in her teaching, whether she was still being true to her social ideals, and whether these were still as strong as when she first entered the teaching profession. Sarah also wanted to clarify, in her own mind, how having a greater sense of spirit could benefit the quality of pedagogical relationships she was committed to nurturing in the context of her classroom, schooling in general and the community. In other words, what did it imply in terms of theory and practice? Sarah also informed me that there have been certain times in her work when she had felt a sense of a quality of achievement which went beyond the routine and the normal, but was not sure how she could articulate this awareness in her discussions with colleagues. The big question she sought to explore was “What would it mean for me to place spirit at the centre of my purpose when continuing to develop responsible and productive pedagogical relations?”

In what follows I present three main themes that capture Sarah’s experience of pedagogical relationships which were significant for her both as a learner and as a teacher. In my discussion I highlight the different ways we co-constructed knowledge of the place of spirit in these relationships and also how we extended our understanding of the possibilities for spirit at three levels of awareness: at the level of story; the level of making conceptual distinctions; and at the level of skill development.

#### **THEME 1- TEACHER AS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE MODEL**

When Sarah made the decision to choose teaching as a career she was optimistic in her ability to foster productive relationships with pupils – an optimism which stemmed from two sources. One of these was the relationship she had experienced

with her own RE teacher when she was a learner. Among other things Sarah felt that she had learnt from this teacher the important value of making a personal response when this was required and the difference that a committed individual can make to people's lives. Reflecting on the story during our dialogue, Sarah became visibly emotional and elaborated on some of the issues she was facing at that particular time in her life, which made this story so significant:

*"When I was perhaps in my third year of secondary school, I had an absolutely fantastic RE teacher. She was a really nice person as well as a very good teacher. She opened my eyes to religion and she opened my eyes to faith and she opened my eyes to the role that religious faith can play in people's lives and how it can change them. How it can influence them and give them comfort... all of these things that actually I hadn't been aware of before. It was like an extra part of my personality was slowly being opened up...this extra dynamic. So I ended up choosing RE to teach for my career as a teacher.*

*I particularly remember the time half-way through my fourth year because it was the time when my Dad became very sick and was diagnosed with cancer...he was sick for a whole year before he died. I remember that even though everyone at the school was aware of what was going on at home the only teacher who actually spoke to me about how things were was my RE teacher. She used to say "How are you doing then?"... "How are things at home?"... "How is your mum coping? She also said to me, "If ever you need to talk to someone, you can always come to me. You don't have to, but the offer is there". During the year that my Dad was slowly going downhill, she became like a personal counsellor to me, someone I felt I could go to at any time to talk about my feelings and anxieties. She actually showed interest in me as a person and thought that I was worth listening to and worth helping: I will remember that for ever. It was she who opened my eyes to the religious aspect. This was just such a different way of being in the world for me and probably the most significant event in my whole life....She was brilliant!"*

I sought further clarification from Sarah on her meaning that her RE teacher had “opened up an extra dynamic” to her personality. Sarah explained this effect in terms of the influence of the teacher’s teaching method and style and also her presence as a role model:

*“She (the RE teacher) used to say to us that she did not intend to fit into the usual mould of what people normally expected from RE teachers, basically someone who gets children to read stories from the bible, then memorise them in order to answer questions on their meaning. She had found, through her faith in Jesus (whom she regarded as her teacher), a way for RE to become a subject that is alive and living through her. She told us how the symbolism of Jesus’ first parable “The Sower” enabled her to understand the necessary precondition which has to exist in the learner if the teaching of RE is to make a difference. The learner has not only to remain open to reflection and faith, but also willing to make an active response to her teaching or it would be like casting seed on barren soil.*

*I remember that she was particularly fond of St Mark’s Gospel in the New Testament because she said it showed better than all the other gospels how Jesus was accomplishing his teaching, not merely through what he said, but also through his actions (for example through his healing miracles). My RE teacher’s living faith in Jesus’s teaching brought her to an understanding that healing was an inseparable part of her work as an RE teacher. She was doing this healing through her voluntary work with the poor and oppressed, extending her hand of friendship, accepting them, through offering herself and her time as resources they could use for “spiritual healing”. I started to really read St Mark’s Gospel and used to meet with her after school and during some of my lunch breaks to share with her the new things I was learning and understanding. I became enthusiastic and filled with wonder at what the symbolism in the stories were revealing to me personally.*

*Somewhere along the line, I underwent a conversion when all the reading and conversations with my RE teacher came together to create a new dynamic of meaning in my mind, which I now realise was, and still is, a living faith in Jesus's teachings".*

Revealing my own interest in symbolism, Sarah and I discussed how the symbolism contained in St Mark's Gospel had specifically affected her. She spoke about this in terms of the effect it had on her thinking, particularly about the reality of miracles in ancient and modern belief systems:

*"Well, I suppose what I mean is that the symbolism started a chain of thinking in my mind, particularly on things I had not considered before. I began to think about, and compare the attitudes towards miracles of the people who lived in the time of Jesus (the ancients, I will call them) with the attitudes of most people living today (the moderns). Ancient people lived in an age which expected miracles. Their expectancy came not from superstition (as we would like to believe), but from a real conviction of the nearness of God, of a divine power. Because ancient people never forgot the mysterious presence of a divinity, they remained open to the wonder of miracles...and the result was, miraculous events happened. On the other hand, most people in the modern world have forgotten God and his divine presence in the world. There is a kind of rationalism that has killed people's ability and even their willingness to wonder. Modern people have become not only suspicious of miracles, but very distrustful of anything that can't be rationally explained. Hence in many people an important source of power has been lost, or at the very least, been suppressed.*

*Miracles were called "dunamies" by the ancients. The word means "works with power" so miracles were believed to be the irruption of divine power into the human situation for help and healing"*

*So we can say that the healing powers of Jesus were concerned with the restoration of faith in miracles. It was faith in the knowledge that the divine power will always find a way to enter the human situation of those*

*whose hopes have been shattered, who suffer hardship, disadvantage or misfortune, in order to bring help and healing”.*

Sarah’s accounts of her formative experience with her RE teacher clearly represented an important pedagogical experience, an experience which Sarah felt demonstrated the presence of spirit in terms of an *I/Thou* relationship. We used this insight as an opportunity in our dialogue to review some of the features which made this an *I/Thou* relation for Sarah. In order to arrive at our interpretation we considered all the events that occurred between Sarah and her teacher which we felt actualised the *I/Thou* relation. We paid particular attention to how the relationship and dialogue eventually developed. The interpretation presented below represents the outcome of our dialogue for this story theme. Relevant quotations from Buber’s writings are written in bold to illustrate further our understanding of the specific features of *I/Thou* relating.

### **SPIRIT, RELIGIOSITY AND RE TEACHING**

Sarah’s RE teacher brought the spirit of religiosity into her teaching through what she contributed in terms of her personal relations with the subject and her personal views which had grown out of this relationship. She shared with her pupils her intention to move beyond the kind of narrow ‘mould’ within which RE teachers, in her mind, were expected to practice in terms of teaching method and style, in order to teach the subject as a living faith which came through her.

***“The educator is neither a funnel nor a pump, but the effective representative of the world to his pupils” (Buber, 1947, p.89).***

She contributed a rich understanding and deeply held faith in the image of Jesus as her teacher, whose teachings she had taken into her whole being, so that the knowledge ‘lived’ as an aspect of her identity and self expression. In this way she was not only imparting subject knowledge as content, but also allowing the pupils to see her learning and the unique perspective she brought to her teaching.

***“No one can show others a reality except as it presents itself in him. A body of knowledge attains the quality of significance for the pupil only***



*through an encounter with a person in whom the knowledge lives. Education is therefore not primarily a matter of content, but an encounter between persons” (Buber, 1957, p.100).*

The RE teacher’s living faith in Jesus’s teaching also provided Sarah with an inspired understanding of how she could bring together the unity of teaching and healing functions into the world. We read in Sarah’s account how the teacher led the religious life through working with the poor and oppressed, extending the hand of friendship and offering herself and her time as resources for “spiritual healing”.

*“Religion’s concern is not with God but with man’s intercourse with God. Since that is not conducted in the world, but is about the world, the purpose of organised religion should be the sanctification of that dialogue, not in a building set aside for it, not by way of liturgical formulas, but in what is done in the house, office, factory, field” (Buber, 1961, p.79-80).*

Her teacher began the process of making subtle shifts towards relation with Sarah, initially through expressing a pastoral concern for Sarah’s wellbeing in the face of her grief over her father’s condition. The teacher showed her concerned presence by offering herself as a personal counsellor and confidant, someone to whom Sarah could turn to at any time to talk through her feelings and anxieties.

*“The teacher does not have to be continually concerned with the child, but must have gathered him into his life in such a way that the steady potential presence of the one to the other is established and endured” (Buber, 1965, p.98).*

By showing interest in Sarah as a person who was worth listening to and worth helping, the teacher lived through Sarah’s situation in all its aspects, not only from her point of view but also that of Sarah, her pupil.

*“Genuine responsibility exists where there is real responding” (Buber, 1966, p.20).*

By animating Sarah with her teaching of Jesus's healing miracles, through the lens of St Mark's Gospel, the teacher brought to life a potential *"Thou"* as Sarah became involved in something new which proved engrossing for her. The shift in relationship, brought about by their mutual interest in the symbolism contained in the message of Jesus's healing miracles, changed significantly the status of the *"between"* from being purely a pastoral concern to a dialogic meeting of interests.

***"The unfolding of the sphere of the between is the "dialogical" or the dialogue which takes place between I and Thou. Meaning is not found in one or both partners, it is found only in their dialogue, in this "between" which they live together" (Buber, 1998, p.75).***

In their dialogue the teacher nurtured the development of Sarah's religious spirit through encouraging openness in her search for meaning and truth, welcoming her questions and stimulating her capacity to wonder – thus rejecting the notion of religious teaching as the transmission of abstract principles. Sarah was also encouraged to search for her own personal way to relate to their shared topic of interest. In this way the RE teacher not only confirmed Sarah as a mutual partner in the dialogue, but also recognised her uniqueness and individuality as a person. Her act of confirmation therefore went beyond mere acceptance of Sarah to stimulating her potentialities for growth and development.

***"Genuine dialogue means turning towards the other person, while at the same time recognising and fully accepting the otherness of that person in his or her wholeness and uniqueness, rather than by membership of a category" (op cit, p.75).***

The dialogic process achieved three transformative results. First, Sarah found herself becoming open to wonder. Second, she underwent a conversion in which a new dynamic of meaning was created in her mind, which she describes as a "living faith in Jesus's teachings". Third, in the process of her conversion, a new creative chain of thinking was initiated which made real to Sarah the difference between ancient and modern attitudes towards the mysterious presence of the divine and the wonder of miracles. On this point Buber says:

***“Religiosity starts anew with every young person, shaken to his core by the mystery” (Buber, 1967, p.80).***

To sum up, Sarah’s story is a good example of how memories of a teacher as a significant role model can leave a lasting impression on learners. In Sarah’s case the spirit of the relation produced a number of transforming effects, particularly on her understanding of religious education as a subject discipline. Recollecting this story enabled Sarah to formally acknowledge her great debt to her RE teacher and also put into words the real significance of her influence. As a “great character” and educator the teacher did something for Sarah which she could not do alone – that is, she gave educative power to RE as a subject discipline through her teaching example and investment in Sarah’s life. The experience deeply inspired Sarah’s thinking and ultimately influenced her decision to become, herself, an RE teacher.

### **SOCIAL IDEALS AND THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER EDUCATION**

In addition to her formative experience as a learner, Sarah was influenced during her teacher training programme to develop strong social ideals and a social conscience, particularly towards disadvantaged youngsters. She had come to believe that many of these youngsters were being marginalised by impersonal school structures and arrangements. Based on her ideals Sarah chose to work in a school in one of the poorest London boroughs, and this experience further strengthened her view that larger societal inequities had become so embedded in the structures and functioning of schools that they were no longer serving the real needs of their communities. She felt that teachers have a moral responsibility in schools located in these communities to work together, not only to deliver the curriculum, but also to bring about a transformation in the structures in order to make them more responsive to the real needs of disadvantaged pupils. By this she did not mean that teachers should act to subvert the dominant structures, but rather that they should remain alert and receptive to new ideas and initiatives which would help them to make positive changes in incremental and decisive steps:

*“Working in my current school, which is in one of the poorest boroughs in Inner London, has really opened my eyes to the number of pupils who come to school hungry, poorly clothed and even abused. Simply put, there*

*is a kind of gap between what the school offers and what many of our pupils are experiencing in their personal lives. Schools need to understand the kinds of poverty and social disadvantage issues that kids bring with them on a daily basis. For example, I had a tutor group last year where some of my kids were coming to school at eight o'clock in the morning so that I could make repairs to their shoes because their parents couldn't afford to buy them new ones. There was one boy in particular whose shoes were so bad that I actually took him down the road to buy him a new pair. I also had kids who were coming to school at half past seven in the morning, tired and hungry, and would hang around after school until half past six because they didn't want go back to a home that wasn't very nice.*

*We have many pupils with only one parent and pupils whose families are suffering from one dysfunction or another. Many are struggling to make ends meet on income support. I suppose what I am saying is that many of our pupils have no experience of a firm family structure, parents who are around to provide the kind of guidance on how they should behave through the key stages of their lives. Many, instead, look to football heroes, peer led gangs etc. to provide their socialisation - even when they are relying on their own resourcefulness to know how to cope and survive. What I am also saying is that kids need to know that schools are there for them too”.*

Sarah noted that such an attitude was finding support from some unexpected sources. Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) were now expecting schools to demonstrate effective policies for promoting greater inclusion and responsiveness to local communities as a positive feature of their accountability practices. Although Sarah judges the motives behind the current demand for inclusion, she saw within it a logic that she could use to further her social ideals. She also saw it as an improvement on those visions of schooling which stress competitive markets. During our dialogue Sarah was very clear about this policy and its consequences, particularly how it had affected relationships and attitudes towards pupils in her school:

*“At the height of Thatcherism, new visions of what schools could offer disadvantaged kids, in terms of social justice, was off the agenda. Schools were markets and had to go along with her policy of market forces. They had to deliver marketable performance outputs in order to survive, so only goal and objectives oriented teachers were considered desirable. The consequences of this policy were that it was very divisive for internal relations. It set departments against each other because they had to compete for resources and more importantly, this distracted people from a sense of working together for the benefit of all our kids and the school as a whole. Curiously nowadays, Ofsted seems to be placing a greater emphasis on praising schools who take part in developing new schemes and projects to meet DFES inclusion initiatives – though I suspect that, underneath it all, the real motivation is to force schools into finding ways of keeping kids off the streets when their parents are working, not around, or just don’t care where their youngsters are. Whatever the truth of the matter, we can regard this new way of looking at things from a more hopeful perspective, that is, it stimulates greater awareness and reflection about the advantages and disadvantages of the current structures of schooling”.*

## **THEME 2-THE BREAKFAST CLUB COMMUNITY**

Sarah’s views on the need for schools to make a personal and human response to the plight of socially disadvantaged youngsters found ultimate expression in her decision to take responsibility for developing a Breakfast Club as part of her school’s provision of Inclusion activities. This initiative not only provided Sarah with a means of developing a new pedagogical structure in the school, it also provided an opportunity for her to incorporate a core of “human goals” that went beyond the project’s formal list of instrumental goals and purposes:

*“In the Breakfast Club Project, I felt confident that I had found a genuine way to address one of the real needs of disadvantaged kids as part of the school’s inclusion drive. It was actually something I felt that I wanted to bring my mind, body and spirit into making a reality. I can still feel the*

*emotion I had at the beginning; that I was really doing something right and worthwhile – and so I went into action.*

*I started having informal conversations with some of my colleagues, with pupils, catering staff, and the school caretaker to tell them of my vision for the project and also to find out their views and ideas. I found, surprisingly when we consider how much pressure is being placed on staff in schools nowadays, that most of the people I spoke to show an interest. I arranged a meeting to bring everyone together to talk about the Project's official goals and objectives and more importantly, to agree on some "human goals" which I hoped would help us to sustain the human commitment necessary for seeing the Project through. We achieved agreement on three "human goals" which were:*

- 1. **Equality** between persons irrespective of status, race, religion. We interpreted equality to mean that at the deeper level people are fundamentally equal as human beings. So in the Project, this level of equality should be demonstrated whether or not a person is a teacher, pupil, or member of the catering staff.*
- 2. **Appreciation** of different views as they arise. Appreciation we agreed meant showing mutual regard for the views and issues that people bring with them. It entails being fair-minded, valuing different skills and knowledge that people bring to the Project*
- 3. **Commitment** to the success of Project. This was best shown, we agreed, through our shared concern to get the Breakfast Club not only up and running, but something that is sustainable, that will take on a life of its own and become an ongoing Project".*

During our dialogue Sarah explained that incorporating these three human goals into the project's objectives represented, for her, a way of giving significance to what took place between people. It was a way of setting the parameters of responsibility she expected each person to show towards others. As project members began to take their moral obligations to each other and to the initiative seriously Sarah described how the Breakfast Club became a structure in the school which fostered new relations between staff and pupils and between the school and its local community:

*“I suppose the real success of the Project was that it brought into being a group of dedicated people who believed that through working together, we could bring something positive into the lives of others. Making the Breakfast Club a reality was something we were all committed to. The relationships that happened between people were both interpersonal and intergenerational. School roles and statuses were relaxed and there was a close family feeling about the group. For example, two of the teacher volunteers who were new to the profession saw the club as an opportunity for meeting and getting to know pupils and staff in a different context. In fact the friendship and trust which were developed between members of staff from different departments generated some new cross-curricular ideas for working together. Also, pupils gained a better understanding of how things really worked in schools. They learnt that teachers could not always just make instant decisions, that they needed to bring things up at formal staff meetings, or before more senior members of staff before final decisions could be made. More importantly, the Project provided pupils with a better understanding of how people, who share the same vision - but may have different perspectives on how to bring it about, can work productively together to see the vision through. My hope is that this learning stays with them when it comes time for them to take part in making positive and productive changes for the benefit of their own communities.*

*As the work of the Project has become more widely known, people from the surrounding community have come to respect and appreciate our efforts. Some members of the local community have even volunteered to undertake supervision duties. The Breakfast Club has started to take on more of a community spirit, it is still part of the school's formal structure – of course - but it is also separate in many ways because of its closer links with the local community”.*

I have presented this full account of our dialogue about development of the Breakfast Club because it provides a good example of how a group of people (students and

staff) was able to move beyond the limitations of traditional school structures to express a human and shared response to the plight of socially disadvantaged youngsters. In the process the Breakfast Club community came to represent an alternative pedagogical structure in the school which fostered the development of personal relations within the larger functional organisation of the school. Sarah and I agreed that her success with the Breakfast Club demonstrated that such arrangements were not only necessary but desirable, particularly in schools where there is a tendency to marginalise the personal relationship in favour of the more impersonal and instrumental relation. The story also illustrates my earlier theorising of Macmurray's arguments and interpretation of a third way that we can conceptualise the place of spirit in pedagogical relations.

If we recall, Macmurray, in his philosophy of the new form of the personal, identifies two lives which we all live: the personal life which has its centre in the home and love as its principle; and the functional life with its centre in the workplace and has its basis in organised co-operation. These two lives give rise to two types of relationships between persons, what Macmurray calls "*personal relations*" and "*functional relations*". Functional, or instrumental, relations are necessary because people depend on them to facilitate the satisfaction of many of their needs. In contrast, personal relations exist in order to help people to become themselves in and through relations with others. In these kinds of relationships, for example, friendship or a close community, people do things together out of a common interest which they all share. Macmurray stresses two principles which should govern the relation between these two lives, these are: "The functional life is for the personal life; the personal life is *through* the functional life". I have argued that this insight provides a new way of understanding how the spirit of the personal can be approached through the development and cultivation of new pedagogical structures in schools. People are not merely functionaries, personal relations are also necessary if people are to realise the common reality which makes them persons rather than objects.

Building on Macmurray's arguments in the field of education, Fielding (2004) further suggests that the influence of the personal can serve to transform functional organisations so that they become more person centred. The development of the Breakfast Club in Sarah's school seemed to illustrate this point in two ways. First, it



has nurtured a new pedagogical structure within the functional organisation of the school which is more responsive to the personal needs of the school's most socially disadvantaged youngsters. Second, as Sarah agreed, its presence has contributed greatly to the school becoming a more person-centred and responsive learning community.

### **SPIRIT AND THE “*CREATIVE*” AGENT**

Our dialogue also enabled Sarah and me to reflect on the different qualities of spirit she was able to bring to the development of the Breakfast Club through a demonstration of her creative agency. To aid this process we agreed to use the framework of three foundational qualities of spirit which came out of my theorising. To remind ourselves, the three qualities are:

- i. *Spirit-as-breath* (enables individuals to breathe new life into situations and to inspire others)
- ii. *Spirit-as-special-talent* (moves individuals to rediscover talents and the capability for invention)
- iii. *Spirit-as-creator* (organises and integrates the different qualities into a creative strategy and takes the steps to put it into effect)

### **SPIRIT-AS-BREATH**

Sarah described this as the quality of spirit which had animated and motivated her internal drive to meet with different people to discuss her plans for the Breakfast Club, for instance why she felt that such a structure and provision was needed in the school and what the benefits would be for pupils, staff and the local community. It also motivated her to ask for help, whilst also inspiring others to work with her to make things happen:

*“It is a quality of spirit which enabled me to stimulate and inspire others in such a way that they were moved to take part, to become involved by working with me. For some the inspiration moved them to make a full commitment, for others it created an intention to participate if and when they were called upon”*

Through her inspiration of others Sarah was able to move beyond an individual to a shared interest. In so doing she demonstrated the positive action necessary for entering into personal relations, what Macmurray (1961) refers to as the “You and I”.

### **SPIRIT-AS-SPECIAL-TALENT**

Sarah spoke about her understanding of this quality of spirit and its use in her creative strategy in religious terms:

*“One of my personal symbols of what a talent is comes from Jesus’s teachings of the parable of “The Talents” (Matthew 25: 14-30). This parable emphasizes the importance of keeping faith with what God has entrusted to us. God has given each of us certain gifts. Jesus says that these are the five, two and one talents respectively. He urges us to be like the first two servants who, when their master returned, had used and doubled their talents. We should not be like the fearful and insecure servant who, lacking faith, buried his one talent in the soil, thus preventing its increase.*

*The talent I was able to bring to the Project is my ability to connect my creativity to new ideas or new initiatives. So I would say that I have a talent for initiating the creation of new structures and getting things off the ground”*

Sarah went on to describe how she invented an inner-support structure which helped her to think and plan from the standpoint of action:

*“In the planning stage of the project, I needed to invent an internal feedback loop between the idealist and the realist parts of my Self. It would have been easy to get carried away in the excitement of things in the early stages, but the realist part would “reel me in” and help me to focus on manageable steps, breaking things down in terms of short, medium and long term goals. There was also inner direction which came from imagined conversations I had with my old RE teacher. I would think, “What would she have done in this situation?” She became someone I*

*could still speak to in my mind and call on if I needed some words of wisdom or when I felt myself flagging and needing an extra dose of courage”*

Whereas Sarah’s Idealist Self kept her open to the possibilities of achieving her vision for the new structure, with the attitude that anything was possible, her Realist Self recognised the need to act rationally, that is to break her proposed action down into successive steps for achieving the vision. Rational action also required of her a level of inventive flexibility, which Sarah described as an ability to anticipate potential problems and imagine how old resources could be utilised in new ways.

### **SPIRIT-AS-CREATOR**

Sarah believed that the strategy she had adopted, and worked closely with others to achieve, called for a level of *dedication* found only in certain kinds of builders. During our dialogue, she used the image of cathedral builders to symbolise the co-operative and creative group spirit of those who took part in the development of the Project:

*“Cathedral builders need a certain kind of dedication which they bring to the task of creating a building that people will appreciate, with wonder and admiration for its craftsmanship. They also need to carry in their hearts a sense of the sacred, a sense of the holy.”*

She added that everyone had put their hearts and souls into making the Breakfast Club a success, but that they were also aware that a re-evaluation of the project’s goals would be necessary for its ongoing creation:

*“In the first phase, everyone was enthusiastic and creative because we were working with a definite common interest and purpose in mind. The project is now in its second phase and the Breakfast Club, I am proud to say, is operating successfully and efficiently. Of course, we have had our crisis moments, but we kept reminding ourselves of the three human goals we started with and pledged to uphold – equality, appreciation and commitment - which formed the bond which kept us hopeful and positive*

*when things got fraught. For the third phase it is important that the Breakfast Club does not become a structure that gets completely swallowed up in the efficiency of the school's structure and purposes alone, but that its social justice and community commitments continue to be its guiding lights".*

Through reflecting on this story, and taking part in our dialogue about it, Sarah and I were able to gain a clearer understanding of the place of spirit in her development of the Breakfast Club. Sarah was able to acknowledge how she had put to use the many-sidedness of her agency, both as an individual and also as a socially responsible agent able to work with others to realise a successful initiative. Also, how her commitment to including a wider set of human goals in her Project's objectives contributed to the emergence of a genuine community spirit which nourished the growth of personal relationships. Sarah and I agreed that there were three important features of the Breakfast Club community which qualified it as a pedagogical structure that expressed the spirit of the personal. First, as a mode of community it brought staff, pupils and local people together into a voluntary association of persons, united by common concerns and values. Second, it served to bring the school closer to becoming a person-centred institution, better able to meet some of the needs of its most socially disadvantaged youngsters. Finally, our dialogue on this story theme suggests that, in order to continue to nourish the growth of such communities in schools, a level of dedication is required amongst staff and pupils to sustain the momentum of working together to achieve common goals.

### **THEME 3 - FACE-TO FACE CONFLICT**

Whilst the two accounts above represented successful pedagogical experiences for Sarah, the final story theme, which we spent some time discussing in our dialogue, is of a problematic issue of relationship she was currently experiencing with one of her students. The story is about a [face-to-face] confrontation with the pupil and Sarah's struggles to diffuse a misunderstanding before it escalated:

*"Recently I have been having a number of incidents with a particular pupil, in one of my RE groups. Well, the most recent and upsetting is when he got cross with me because I told him off for spitting. Now this is a*

*particularly difficult pupil with some depressing background issues. I know this because he was in my tutor group last year. Well, basically he responded by telling me to shut up and then proceeded, in front of all the other pupils, to rant and rave – telling me how he hated me and he hated the lesson. He was even swearing and calling me names. I kept as calm as I could because I didn't want to antagonise him further by getting into an argument with him. I just watched his mouth moving and how he was contorting his face when he spoke – a mixture of anger and indifference – and he was shaking.*

*I remember thinking at the time that his response was over the top, completely misplaced, I merely told him off – there were no threats. Then, just as suddenly as he had started, he stopped. It was like he was drained and all the fight had gone out of him. He sat down, his body sagging in the chair and he looked absolutely miserable. I said to him "And Joshua, you wanted to know why I didn't have a tutor group this year". Then another pupil, without thinking, turned to Joshua and said, "It's all your fault why we haven't got Miss for our tutor this year". Then everything escalated as all the other pupils started putting the blame on Joshua, telling him that he was a trouble maker and that they didn't want him in the tutor group.*

*I realised that the pupils misunderstood what I said. What I meant was, I could not understand why Joshua was treating me differently this year than he did last year when I was his tutor. I explained this to the class and by the end of the lesson I thought things had been sorted out. Even though I asked Joshua to stay behind for a chat, he sneaked out.*

*Well, after school when I got home, I realised that the whole incident had really cut me deep, I still felt angry, confused and guilty all rolled into one. I spent half the night replaying the whole incident in my head, trying to get some closure on it.*

*The next morning, when I got to school, their new form tutor came to see me and said that his form had told him that he was no longer going to be*

*their tutor and that I was going to take the tutor group from now on. I had to explain to him what had happened. I felt really guilty for letting things get so out of hand”.*

As we reflected on this story it became clear that it actually contained a number of related sub-plots, or a series of different stories. Of particular interest was how, during the incident, Sarah found herself encountering everything that was outside herself. For example, her reprimand of Joshua had no influence whatsoever on the way that he proceeded to behave towards her. Sarah was experiencing a situation where she could not influence, or affect, this student in any way because he was demonstrating that he was wholly other than her and her expectations. Realising that what Sarah was conveying through this story was possibly a failure to respond ethically, I shared this insight with Sarah and suggested this as one of the ways we might approach the interpretation of this experience and the possibilities for a new relationship.

The incident also provoked powerful emotions in Sarah, prompting her to describe the emotional states she moved through as the incident progressed – from being angry, confused and guilty, to an eventual feeling of being “cut” deeply. Sarah was experiencing what Davies (1989) has referred to as one of the guilt traps of teaching. These are patterns which impel and imprison many teachers within emotional states which are personally unrewarding and professionally unproductive. In his essay on *The Politics of Guilt* Davies argues that at the centre of the feeling of guilt is self-disappointment – a sense of having done badly, fallen short, betrayed a personal ideal, standard or commitment. However, guilt is not necessarily damaging in its effects. Buber (1966), for example, defines guilt as concerned essentially with the failure to relate. It is also a necessary first step for “discovering” the voice of conscience, a process he sees as one of self illumination which is attained through the confrontation of one’s guilt (op cit, p.147-8). In this way guilt can become a signal not for despair, but for hope and renewal.

## **SARAH'S GUILT**

During our dialogue Sarah revealed why her emotions over the incident were so strong. To start with she was feeling guilt because she had let Joshua down, after hearing from other students that Joshua was really cross with her because she ceased to be there for him now that she was no longer his tutor. Hearing this information had affected Sarah because the remark she had made during the incident had the effect of turning the rest of the class against Joshua and he had stayed away from school for a period of time. Sarah felt, also, that she had fallen short of her ideals because, through a casual remark, she had inadvertently marginalised the very pupil she had come into teaching to help. Mixed in with these feelings were Sarah's fears that, as a senior manager, her status had been put at risk by the incident and she was worried about losing face in terms of the other pupils. However, she welcomed the opportunity that our dialogue provided her to air these feelings and felt more able to begin the process of breathing spirit into a future, more productive, relationship with Joshua.

## **ACKNOWLEDGING JOSHUA AS THE VULNERABLE OTHER**

Following our illumination of the factors which had grounded Sarah's perceptions of the incident in a guilty sense of failure and regret, Sarah shared additional information about Joshua's home background situation and the importance of her presence in his life when she was his tutor:

*"One of the things about Joshua which I think that you should know about is that his home life is absolutely terrible. His dad isn't around and hasn't been for the majority of Joshua's life. He lives with his mum who is an alcoholic, but he has an older sister who, basically, is the primary carer. He was a late addition to the tutor group I had last year and he pushed and pushed, but I pushed back until we came to a mutual understanding. I think he thought "Yeah, this is the person...I kinda like this teacher...She does things, she stands by her word. She does what she says and she's okay".*

*It took a further few months, but we reached another understanding that he needed to change the way that he was talking to people, particularly*

*the way he was talking to some of his peers. He would “cuss” pupils he didn’t like and make derogatory remarks about their physical appearance and even remarks about their parents. Well, gradually, we reached an understanding about that and Joshua became quieter, calmer and friendlier. He knew that I was always there in the background to rescue him when he got himself into difficult situations and to keep him out of trouble. I know that all the kids must think that because I am not their form tutor anymore, that I have just dropped them”.*

In sharing this additional information, Sarah began the movement away from her own preoccupations of feeling guilty and hurt to a recognition of Joshua’s vulnerability. She had reached a level of compassion and “listening love” (Tillich, 1969) and also a desire to explore alternative ways of responding in such situations. She went on to pose the following question:

*“How can I bring qualities of spirit, to create a new strategy for responsible responding during face-to-face conflicts, in ways which are empowering for both self and pupils, and which would enable me to come to an understanding of how to resolve such conflicts productively?”*

Sarah’s question prompted us to consider how we might reconfigure her understanding of the face-to-face incident in such a way that it factors ethical responsibility for Joshua into the very heart of what it means to be spirit orientated. This led to a discussion on possible ways that we could build experiential links between Levinas’s ethics of other-centredness and Sarah’s positive portrayal of herself as rescuer in her story. Sarah also suggested that it would be useful if we could develop a profile of the experiences and behaviours which characterise the actions of a rescuer in the ethical relation which she could take back to school to discuss with her colleagues. To facilitate this we began with a review of some of the relevant features of Levinas’s ethics which we would use in the construction of the profile.



## ***FACE AND ETHICAL LEARNING***

In his philosophy of the ethical relation, Levinas reframes ethical responsibility as a precondition for subjectivity. He makes clear that responsibility is not a matter of choice, or commitment, or free-will – one is already consigned to infinite responsibility. Subjectivity can never be-for-itself prior to being-for-the-other. Since responsibility for the other predates subjectivity it bypasses rational calculating thought and exists as a radical openness and willingness to respond to the *face* of the other, as a summons that cannot be ignored. Hence, in Levinas the ethical is born and reborn in face-to-face relations.

What does this encounter with the *face* of the other reveal? Levinas says that his meaning of *face* does not reveal a plastic form, or portrait, but in its nakedness, it is the face of the vulnerable *Other* in his or her destitution. There is an appeal in the *face* which is ethical and calls for responsibility. It is an appeal which comes from an ethical position of height, or transcendence, as the one for whom I am directly responsible. The call commands me to interpose myself between the *Other* and harm's way. Furthermore, this ethical encounter with the *face* figures, for Levinas, as the event of an epiphany. The epiphany, in the ethical relationship bears the trace of God in the face of the *Other*. It is in this sense that Levinas characterises responsibility for the *Other* as “the very coming of God to the idea”, or “the fall of God into meaning” (Levinas, 1969, p.215).

Following our review of these features of the ethical relation, Sarah and I were able to identify some of the main links between Levinas's ethics and actions which characterise our proposed profile of teacher-as-rescuer.

## **THE TEACHER-AS-RESCUER: A PROFILE**

The following sets out the six steps of the profile:

1. During a face-to-face encounter with the *Other*, the teacher-as-rescuer knows that ethical subjectivity, without conditions, requires her to assume responsibility for the *Other*, without reservations – including the *Other* as persecutor.

2. She adopts a passive, but attentive, stance that does not become fixed on the details of the situation, but remains open and ready for what comes from without. She is receptive to vulnerability in the face of the *Other*, that calls her forth as a rescuer to stand decisively between the *Other* and harm's way.
3. When she "hears" the appeal to rescue, to assume responsibility, spirit enters with her ethical concern to say "here I am!" By accepting responsibility she enters into subjectivity and the ethical knowledge of how to rescue. She becomes changed both by the encounter and as she learns to rescue.
4. Care takes on significance for the teacher-as-rescuer as the kind of care that can only be given by the human *face*. It is a benevolence and kindness that is focused on the interest of the *Other* and so means "*being otherwise*" (Oliner and Oliner, 1988)
5. The willingness to provide the necessary resources and activities to support rescue becomes concretised in the teacher-as-rescuer's actions. She also begins to identify networks of rescue to help in her response to the call of the *Other*. In Sarah's case she took a number of actions designed to support Joshua's reintegration into the class. She started by using the ethical message in one of Jesus's parables, the parable of the Good Samaritan, to stimulate and guide peer discussions on the different issues which the incident with Joshua had presented. Pupils were then encouraged to suggest ideas for resolving the issues, based on their understanding of the actions of the Good Samaritan, as an example of biblical good practice. Pupils then reflected on the consequences of their ideas for the individual involved, for example in the Good Samaritan story the victim was empowered. This provided an opportunity for Sarah and her students to explore the work of modern day Samaritans as a continuation of a service which cares for others. One of the outcomes of this process was that a responsible member of the class willingly volunteered to act as Joshua's class "buddy", to support him in remaining calm in lessons. Following a long talk with Joshua and his sister, Sarah was able to reach agreement with them about times when she would be available to see Joshua, in order to keep in touch with his progress.

6. As she returns to her daily work, the teacher-as-rescuer does so with the ethical learning and spiritual sustenance that such an encounter provides and, also, a widening of her personal horizon that reflects the grace she has received.

## FINAL REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

How has this case study extended and illustrated our understanding of the place of spirit in the pedagogical relationship? How has it answered the question Sarah asked at the start of the process, that is: “What would it mean for me to place spirit at the centre of my purpose for developing effective and productive pedagogical relations?”

Sarah’s case stimulated our knowledge and understanding at three levels of awareness. First, at the level of story: It was through Sarah’s use of story to illustrate her experiences (with her RE teacher, the Breakfast Club community and experiences with Joshua) that we were able to co-construct the significance of spirit in these different relationships. This level of awareness suggests that stories of experience are an effective medium through which teachers can gain knowledge of spirit in the pedagogical relation.

The second level of awareness is the level of making conceptual distinctions. We recall that, in the Breakfast Club story, Sarah explored how she was using her creative agency to bring three qualities of spirit to the task of developing the initiative. Taking part in this process enabled Sarah to make the important distinction between “everyday creativity” and creativity that comes from discovering one’s talent or personal genius. Through this level of awareness Sarah defined her own understanding of “everyday creativity” as:

*“...what teachers do on a daily basis when teaching a topic from a new angle or designing a scheme of work which brings together different concepts to present the topic in a new and original way.”*

Whereas she describes creativity that comes from discovering and using one’s special talent or genius as:

*“...one’s spiritual gift or inspiration. You get a feeling of excitement and think “this is me!” You then find yourself on a rapid learning curve of actions which gets stimulated by the talent you are displaying.”*

This second level of awareness suggests that teachers who are committed to the development of new structures for pedagogical practice would benefit from knowledge of qualities of spirit, such as special talent and inventive flexibility, and opportunities provided in schools for their discovery and use.

The third level of awareness is the need for teachers to be exposed to a wider range of skills for effectively responding to and managing the diverse behaviours of students. For instance, this should include being exposed to knowledge about the possibilities for ethical responsibility and learning which exceeds the resources of the already known. My intent here is not to devalue knowledge about the different management styles currently available for teachers, but to suggest that, when faced with individuals whose behaviours point to larger societal problems, we need also to consider cultivating more humane and relational qualities of spirit.

First, and foremost, this requires a reflection on our current habits of attending to pupils and then learning how to “attend otherwise”. Boler (1999) is helpful here because she suggests that the familiarity of our habits make our struggle for unlearning very arduous. He introduces the need for an explicit “pedagogy of discomfort” that gives emotional room for individuals to recognise when habits “have become immune to flexibility; and to identify when and how our habits harm ourselves and others” (op cit, p.186).

Mayes (2002), in his taxonomy of the teacher as archetype of spirit, gives us the alternative image of the Zen master who practises *mindfulness*. He writes that mindfulness is an egoless presence which enables the teacher to be totally *Other* centred (op cit, p.711). Tremmel (1993), in his discussion of the state of mindfulness, includes the ability to “pay attention right here, right now and to invest the present moment with full awareness” (op cit, p.433). Finally, Tallon (1998) has written of a distinctive *affective consciousness* which issues forth in an affectivity whose response to the *Other* is achieved through ethical acts of valuing. These practices provide

useful insights into how teachers might begin to approach the state of passive attention, before knowledge, of the ethical relation.

Whilst I have explored the possibilities for spirit around different levels of awareness Sarah also suggested two attitudes of teachers in the current educational climate which could deter individuals from considering pedagogic practices around the theme of spirit. One of these is the growing complacency of many teachers, particularly those who have been in the profession for a few years. This complacency can be caricatured as follows: “We have a curriculum framework which lays out what we have to do, what we have to accomplish to connect to culture and economy, so we need to do nothing else but implement it and hope for the best”.

Clearly there are value positions to overcome, not to mention the implications they pose for the future development of ideas and visions of pedagogy. Talk of spirit may be interpreted, not in terms of possibility, but in terms of upsetting the status quo. Hence, serious consideration would have to be given to how one provides a context in which the theme of spirit can become a common understanding and not a threat.

Another attitude stems from teachers who become trapped in a kind of professional perfectionism, a condition which is structured by the intensification pressures, and open-ended nature, of teachers’ work. This finding is consistent with the view of Hargreaves & Tucker (1991) that such teachers see themselves as careerists and so represent another “layer” of resistance to alternative ways of knowing and practice. Cultivating a high level of mistrust for anything which cannot be tested, or measured, ensures that they remain unreachable and closed to alternative forms of pedagogy. However, Sarah felt that teachers who were new to the profession represented a more promising group for promoting spirit orientated changes.

In closing, the case illustrates several ways in which Sarah’s stories have fostered our understanding of the place of spirit in pedagogical relations and also highlighted two of the attitudes of teachers which pose serious challenges to spirit in the current educational climate. My intention is to revisit these findings in a final concluding section at the end of the study, where I will discuss their implications for developing

the practice of teachers in schools and, more particularly, through teacher education programmes.

## CHAPTER 9

### CASE STUDY OF BETHANY

#### INTRODUCING BETHANY

Bethany has been in the teaching profession for twenty years. She has been at her present school for thirteen years, six of which she spent as a Head of Department before securing the position of Assistant Head. When she first started at the school the student population consisted of mainly White inner-city students and Afro-Caribbeans. More recently, there has been a dramatic change in the cultural mix, with fewer white students and larger numbers of Asian and refugee students. Overnight, it seemed to Bethany, she found herself having to work with a lot of diversity in terms of race, culture, language and history. She gave two reasons for becoming a participant in the study. She wanted first of all to contribute an Afro-Caribbean perspective to the study of the pedagogical relation. She was also motivated by the opportunity it afforded for her to reflect on a particularly challenging period in her career in terms of her relationships with pupils. In response to these challenges Bethany acknowledged that there was a need for her to find new ways of re-building the spirit of those relationships in a period of uncertainty and change.

#### THEME 1- CULTURAL INFLUENCES AND AUTHORITY RELATIONS

To begin to understand Bethany's experience of the pedagogical relation we need to have some idea of where she is coming from in terms of her cultural background and bias. Bethany portrays herself as an Afro-Caribbean woman and teacher from a strong Christian background and supportive church community. She describes her understanding of the pedagogical relationship as being guided by her cultural roots, particularly her experience of authority relations between the young and adults in her church community:

*"In my home and church community it is expected that young people show respect for adults just like they show respect for their parents. The young perceive adults as responsible and have the same trust, confidence in them as they do for their parents. It is not an authority relationship that is between this person and that person but between the young and responsible adults who symbolise extended parent figures. However, if an*

*adult acts unfairly, or is considered to have acted “out of order” in his dealings with a youngster, then that adult loses the respect of all young people. They will begin to display disrespectful behaviours, not overtly necessarily, but by “blanking” the adult. For example, if the adult talks to a youngster, the youngster will look at his friends and laugh. The adult can no longer claim to have respected authority because he has lost his presence as a responsible adult in the eyes of the young. He would have to work very hard to earn it back, but a level of wariness and distrust will always remain among the young people”.*

In Bethany’s formative cultural experience, relations between the young and adults is then an authority relation connected by the word “respect”. To earn that respect adults are required to demonstrate their standing and presence as adults, in terms of someone who is both older and wiser, is responsible and can establish meaningful interpersonal relationships with the young which garners their respect

Secure in this cultural understanding of authority relations, Bethany used this insider knowledge to inform the way she sought to establish pedagogical relations with all her students. Over the years she has been particularly successful in building strong professional bonds with Afro-Caribbean students and their families. However, since the changes in the cultural mix of the school, she has noticed certain changes in the way that students were behaving towards each other and also the way they were perceiving their relations with teachers.

## **THEME 2 - STUDENT POSITIONING IN RELATION TO *OTHERS***

In this story Bethany highlights a trend she has noticed in her school and which she believes may also be occurring in other ones containing students from diverse cultural and racial groups. She reflects on the effects of this trend on inter-group relations and the sense of civic trauma which seems to be motivating this form of student behaviour.

*“What I have noticed is that schools have become places where students are creating and reinforcing their identities through positioning themselves in particular ethnic or religious groupings. So we have the*



*Afro-Caribbean group, the Muslims, Refugees and even the Islamists. From what I can gather in my conversations with students, they are positioning themselves in this way as a means of showing pride and commitment to their own race or religion. Inter-group relations are generally frowned on, but an unspoken understanding seems to exist between groups that respect is shown for the other's space and right to exist.*

*Listening to the different groups talking among themselves around the school and in the playground, I have noticed another interesting thing. They all seem to share – what I have come to refer to as – a sense of civic trauma. What I mean by this is that they seem to feel that their lives are continually being put under threat either from local gangs or on a wider scale from terrorist events which have happened. But beneath their show of defiance, as manifested in the group forming, there lies a feeling of helplessness. This is because they think that the usual methods for keeping things under control – for keeping them safe – that is, adults and the police, are basically inadequate if people want to commit violence and terrorism”.*

Bethany has also noticed that the Afro-Caribbean students particularly were keeping a subtle distance in their dealings with her and that certain incidents were occurring which suggested a progressive deterioration in her relations with these pupils. Such incidents tended to occur more frequently during or after teaching the citizenship curriculum to particular classes. Bethany told the story of one such incident:

*“In one of my citizenship classes recently I noticed that one of the Afro-Caribbean girls was wearing an old nylon “stocking cap” to cover her hair. Her hair was plaited underneath with some of it sticking out from beneath the headgear. Since wearing such headgear around the school is not recognised uniform I asked her to take the stocking off and hand it to me. I fully expected her to do as she was told because, as a responsible adult, I had asked her nicely and given her a reason why it had to be removed. She stood up and pointed to the Muslim girls and said “Why are*

*you picking on me, look at all these other girls, they are wearing things to cover their hair, why aren't you telling them to take theirs off?" I explained that the headwear that the Muslim girls were wearing was officially recognised school uniform, but wearing a "stocking cap" on your head was not. She sat down refusing to take off her headgear unless the Muslim girls took off theirs. I asked the girl to go and stand outside the room because I felt that she was showing me disrespect when she knew what the school rules were. I told her that I would see to her after I got the lesson started.*

*I was told later that day that the student had complained to the Deputy Head that I was harassing her and treating her unfairly because she was covering her hair and nothing was being said about the Muslim girls. The Deputy Head said that it would be best if I backed off a bit, the excuse being that the girl was wearing the headgear as an "art form".*

Bethany confessed to having a measure of sympathy with the girl's comments. Although the girl was clearly leaving out the obvious religious justifications for why the school rules allowed only Muslim girls to cover their hair, her reasoning, Bethany felt, reflected the kind of confusion that teaching the citizenship curriculum in its current form was unintentionally generating, particularly among ethnic groups. Also it represented one of the few experiences in her teaching career when she had had to confront the reality that a curricular area could become a real barrier between her and her relationships with students:

*"Citizenship education is seen as a way of addressing a perceived erosion of moral standards in the wider society and also widespread apathy when it comes time for people to take part in the political process – voting for instance. It seems that with so many different cultural groups in the UK, people are unsure where they stand because we don't have a clear framework of values which everyone shares.*

*The political powers say that the way to embed such a framework is through the citizenship curriculum. Also, in order to make sure that*

*moral, in addition to politically active, citizens are produced; teachers are expected to teach about morality as an aspect of civic responsibility. So basically, what do we have? A curriculum that aims to produce morally responsible and active citizens through teaching students how the government works and telling them how to behave morally.*

*What really concerns me with this is that at the same time that I am expected to teach civic responsibility – as if there is going to be this universal “We”- I know that the students are not buying into this and instead are becoming very distrustful of the curriculum and also of me because they think that I should know better. For example, Afro-Caribbean students say that they are aware that when their parents tried so hard to fit into the Anglo mainstream they were still denied full participation in the culture because of racism. So they ask, what am I trying to say has changed?*

*I suspect that the girl with the headgear was trying to say, in her own way, that citizenship or no citizenship, there will still be acceptable and non acceptable differences, such as the privileges granted to Muslim girls and not to others”.*

Reflecting on this aspect of Bethany’s story we realised that what was also being revealed was a tension between viewing citizenship education as an objective knowledge – something to know about - or viewing it as a process of building character. I introduced Bethany to Buber’s ideas on *The Education of Character* and we discussed whether it provided us with any useful insights into moral education for citizenship and the resistance Bethany was experiencing from her students.

Buber (1979) makes the distinction between pedagogy in the hard sciences (e.g. Maths and Physics) and the advancement of those conditions necessary for moral growth. In the case of mathematics and physics, learning can be more readily directed towards an identifiable body of subject content using an instructional/didactic model of teaching; this is not the case when it comes to the more problematic field of moral education. Buber argues that this is because students will naturally resist a teacher’s

formal attempts to impose moral propaganda because, unlike “subjects”, morality involves a person in his (or her) totality. The presentation of ethical themes as though they could somehow be isolated from the rest of life strikes the student as artificial: on this point Buber has this to say:

*“If I have to teach algebra I can expect to succeed in giving my pupils an idea of quadratic equations with two unknown quantities. Even the slowest-witted child will understand it so well that he will amuse himself by solving equations at night when he cannot fall asleep. And even one with the most sluggish memory will not forget, in his old age, how to play with  $x$  and  $y$ . But if I am concerned with the education of character, everything becomes problematic. I try to explain to my pupils that envy is despicable and at once I feel the secret resistance of those who are poorer than their comrades. I try to explain that it is wicked to bully the weak, and at once I see a suppressed smile on the lips of the strong. I try to explain that lying destroys life, and something frightful happens: the worst habitual liar of the class produces a brilliant essay on the destructive power of lying. I have made a fatal mistake of giving instruction in ethics, and what I said is accepted as current coin of knowledge; nothing of it is transformed into character building substance” (op cit, p.132-3).*

Buber was convinced that moral education takes place in the encounter between the student and a fully alive teacher who humbly admits to being one among many factors – nature, social and cultural – that makes an impression on the student. The responsibility of knowing this means that the teacher must earn the student’s confidence. When the student realises that the teacher looks upon her duties not simply as an occupation, but as a commitment to persons, in an environment of acceptance, a context is established which allows human questions to be asked. Buber adds that, since such questions will tend to arise from the specific circumstances of the individual person or group, they demand that the teacher respond from her entire being if a new perspective is to be revealed to the student.

Together, we came to the understanding that what Buber's arguments suggested was that teaching for moral citizenship should not be reduced to a set of techniques, procedures and attainment targets. This is because students will have an inherent resistance to moral propaganda which does not involve them as persons with their own concerns and outlook on life. I suggested to Bethany that it may have been such a resistance which triggered the incident in her next story.

#### **THEME 4 - STUDENT RESISTANCE AND LOSS OF RESPECTED AUTHORITY**

In this final story Bethany relates an incident which caused her a lot of distress and trauma, particularly to her self esteem. It shook the very foundations on which she had, throughout the years, built her relationships with pupils and she had to come to terms with the fact that the bonds she had worked so hard to build with her Afro-Caribbean students were being very publicly broken:

*"As part of my responsibilities I took assembly for one of the Year Heads who was absent. Taking assemblies is one of the responsibilities I dread in this role, they are not long enough to get into anything and because of the diversity of religions you can't just, at short notice, pull out your book of assembly topics and choose a reading for the assembly. It's also difficult because students have come to see assembly time as the time when they are given notices about specific events or issues they should attend to. Following the incident with the girl and her headgear, I decided to give a short talk on how it was possible to be a black person and also succeed. As I was getting into my stride, wishing the time to go quickly, I heard someone at the back of the assembly hall suddenly shout "white fodder".*

*I must admit that I was shocked and had to take a few seconds to recover. As my disbelieving ears took in the outburst I saw that the other Afro-Caribbean students were nodding and some murmured to convey that they agreed with what had been shouted out. The other students looked as shocked and perplexed as I did. In the whole thirteen years I have been at the school I have never had my identity and authority as an Afro-Caribbean adult questioned in this way by Afro-Caribbean pupils. I took it as a condemnation in their eyes of how they were now perceiving me.*

*I must admit that I have my suspicions that the remark was made by the same girl that I told off about wearing the headgear, but I couldn't be sure. For this to happen to me suggested in my mind that the relationship I had previously shared and worked hard to maintain with the Afro-Caribbean students had somehow become weakened to the point where the students wanted to demonstrate their collective disrespect for me in such a public way".*

Bethany and I talked about this incident at some length, not in terms of despair, but in terms of the opportunities it provided for self-awareness and enriched human understanding. Also we acknowledged the need to be receptive to what was unpredictably being returned to Bethany through the meanings students had chosen to make and the vulnerabilities that accompany them. On reflection, Bethany said that the incident had forced her to learn some hard lessons about herself and that there was a need to engage in her own integrity work. Finding her "voice of conscience" (Buber, 1979, p.93) she explained that, as an Afro-Caribbean female, occupying a senior management position among an all white male senior management team, she has had to struggle with the nagging thought constantly at the back of her mind that – being a person of colour – the "other than them", she did not quite fit in. She has experienced what she describes as the "push and pull" feelings of uncertainty between the context of her senior management position and her relationships with pupils. Whereas senior management messages are pulling her to demonstrate her toughness, that she can really be "one of the boys", her students were pushing her to treat them like human beings, to hear their views and to act fairly. She was caught between wanting to keep her cultural roots and building herself a new identity around being a senior manager. She wanted to fit in and also desired being perceived as an Afro-Caribbean senior manager, somebody unique.

In my response to Bethany's revelations, I drew her attention to another of Buber's insights, that there are always opportunities for new beginnings. Buber (1979) suggests that it is precisely in situations of conflict and challenge that teachers can cultivate *greatness of character* time and time again. He explains:

***“In spite of all similarities every living situation has, like a new-born child, a new face, that has never been before and will never happen again. It demands of you a reaction which cannot be prepared beforehand. It demands nothing of what is past. It demands presence, responsibility; it demands you. I call a great character one who by his actions and attitudes satisfies the claim of situations out of deep readiness to respond with his whole life, and in such a way that the sum of his actions and attitudes expresses at the same time the unity of his being in its willingness to accept responsibility. As his being is unity, the unity of accepted responsibility, his active life, too, coheres into unity”***  
**(op cit, p.143).**

If a teacher is willing to bring the presence of her whole being – that is, body, mind and spirit – to their work, students usually respond with matching vitality. Then dialogue that ignites the flame of life-and-being occurs, and an integration of learning and living can be achieved.

Following our interpretations of her stories and reflection on the insights gained from Buber’s ideas, Bethany said that, despite the tensions and hurt she has experienced, she was still hopeful of finding ways to heal the splits in her relationships with students. She felt that these emanated mainly from having to teach a citizenship curriculum which was “unreal” because it did not fit with the meanings which students were making of the world around them. Based on our earlier discussion of the different foundational qualities of spirit, and her subsequent reflections on my theorising, Bethany wanted to explore the possibilities of rediscovering her talent as a storyteller and then bringing this talent to the task of enriching the scheme of work she was currently using for her citizenship class. Specifically, she wanted to use her knowledge of the storyteller’s art to include students’ personal stories and local knowledge in the scheme of work. In this way she hoped to build a new foundation on which to develop her relationship with students. She proceeded to frame this question:

*“How can I actualise my special talent as a storyteller and bring this quality of spirit to my work of animating, motivating and constructing new meaning and relationships with pupils?”*

To address Bethany’s problem posing our discussion naturally developed around some of the special features of the storyteller’s art which might be relevant for our task. We started by exploring what kinds of thinking and actions were needed to enter into the storyteller’s perspective. This led us to consider some of the specific pedagogical functions of storytelling, for example how stories might function as both a means of overcoming the distrust students were displaying towards citizenship education, and also a means of re-building relations with Bethany and between the different ethnic and religious groups. We further considered what a storytelling framework would look like, what new authority relations it would suggest for Bethany and her students, and how it might more effectively promote character building, opportunities for dialogue and ethical responsibility.

During our dialogue we developed a preliminary framework consisting of five action steps: (1) identifying the spirit concepts that will animate the process; (2) creating a context for storytelling; (3) preparing information on different genres and story-forms; (4) exploring possibilities for new relationships. Below, I describe how we arrived at the different action steps and provide an overview of the completed framework.

## **IDENTIFYING THE SPIRIT CONCEPTS**

Whilst sharing her experiential knowledge of storytelling as an art form, Bethany identified two senses of spirit which are implicit in the storyteller’s art:

*“First there is the storyteller’s inspiration, or passion, for storytelling which deepens her sense of engagement with the story and her audience. Then there is voice which represents more than just the physical act of speaking. It represents her presence, where she chooses to use different tones and pitches – and, where she chooses to remain silent. But more importantly, there is what moves the voice – the breath or crucial life force”*



As an inspirational *agent* the storyteller acts with intent to create a context for the storytelling. Bethany described the context she wanted to create:

*“I want to create a context that puts students in the role of active storytellers and also critical audience members. Citizenship lacks the subjective voice and needs the voices of students in order to inspire their understanding of themselves as morally active citizens”*

We shared different possible ways that such a context might be created. I suggested using some of the concerns and issues that students had already voiced through their questions, curiosity and displays of resistance and finding ways of incorporating these into the different curricular topic areas. Affirming the concerns of students in this way not only ensures that what they are learning is relevant to their everyday world and experiences, it also goes some way to engaging the content of the curriculum with the specific issues that are important to students both personally and morally. Bethany gave examples of some of the issues and concerns already raised by her students which could be incorporated in her current scheme. These included the following:

1. Issues around Muslim girls in schools and the wider society
2. What can be done to promote non-violence in violent times
3. What religious faith means for different cultural groups
4. Best ways of living in harmony with others while defending one's cultural roots and identity
5. Arguments for and against policing the Internet to stop the spread of child pornography and violent religious propaganda
6. Conflicts between loyalties to one's family and religion versus allegiance to the larger collectives, i.e. schools and civic community

## **GENRES AND STORY FORMS**

Based on Bethany's knowledge of different story-forms and genres we reflected on and compiled a list of possible forms which stories can take. We identified some of the more simple genres of stories found in textbooks as well as those used by storytellers outside the school context, e.g. media stories. We hoped this would

sensitise students to the motivated interpretations people make when they tell stories and support the development of their critical skills:

- i. ***Personal experience stories*** - first person stories based on real incidents in one's life
- ii. ***Legends*** – traditional or cultural stories that show the collective experiences and values of a particular culture, ethnic or religious group
- iii. ***Anecdotes*** – short stories which centre around particular individuals and focus on things said in a particularly witty way
- iv. ***Sacred stories*** – stories of religious festivals, celebrations, rituals. Stories from the Holy Books which can be used to illustrate particular messages
- v. ***Human interest stories*** – stories which enable people to understand worlds other their own, for example stories which illustrate the injustices or hardships suffered by others, stories of the great courageous acts of individuals, stories of the actions of others which carry specific moral messages”.

## **POSSIBILITIES FOR NEW RELATIONSHIPS**

In the final stages of our dialogue we considered what such a framework might suggest for healing the splits which had arisen between Bethany and Afro-Caribbean students. We agreed that it was important, particularly in the early stages of implementing the framework, for Bethany to acknowledge the bond that students had already formed through their positioning into different ethnic and religious groupings. Rather than attempting to separate students from these groups she should concentrate on building the trust necessary for the new learning style to take root. Suggestions for doing this included; using the glance of the educator supported by facial expressions and bodily gestures which signified her enthusiasm and openness to hear different viewpoints; showing her concerned presence by making herself available and willing to listen (including listening to voices of resistance). At the beginning using her *charismatic* authority (Peters, 1966) to open students to the richness of storytelling and the storyteller's art and also to inspire and encourage students' questions and their personal responses. As students become more comfortable with sharing their stories, Bethany can then work towards bringing about a greater equality between groups by providing occasions for dialogue. What is important on these occasions is the sharing

of ideas and hopes around a particular issue or concern. I suggested that Bethany also include occasions for ethical relations by encouraging groups or individuals to report on something new which came from listening and learning from the viewpoints and stories of others. An overview of the proposed framework is shown below

## **FRAMEWORK – CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: INSPIRATION AND VOICE THROUGH STORYTELLING**

### **Action steps**

- Identify the Spirit concepts that will animate the process.
- Act with intention to create the context for student voices to emerge. With the knowing that one is already consigned to infinite responsibility, use the glance of an educator to acknowledge and accept each student as a person with whom an educative relationship is possible.
- Utilize students' own concerns and issues. Layer these within the official curriculum topics as appropriate.
- Encourage students to bring stories around the concerns they have identified (e.g. personal experience stories, media stories etc).
- Prepare information on story-forms and genres. Wherever possible keep written materials flexible and open-ended so that students can add new story forms.
- Whilst allowing for group identity, act on occasions to build character by moving pupils towards individual personhood. Encourage students to include in their stories their own individual perspectives and value positions. Practise second position inclusion, accepting students' concerns and experiences from their standpoints. Respond with one's whole being (body, mind and spirit) to the uniqueness of each experience even if it brings challenge and conflict.
- Use charismatic authority to inspire and encourage student participation and their personal responses. Open students to the richness of storytelling and the storyteller's art. Acknowledge that students will bring with them a host of idiosyncrasies which enable them to resist involvement which cannot be predicted beforehand. Buber (1963b) says that "even when an individual stands in opposition to the other, he heeds, affirms and confirms his opponents as an existing other" (p.238). Remain available, open and willing to listen to

students' voices of resistance. Use respectful authority to explain any misunderstandings or misinterpretations.

- Set up possibilities within storytelling activities for student dialogue or narrative communion, through the sharing of ideas and hopes around such issues as race and religion.
- Include opportunities for ethical relations by encouraging students to report on new insights gained from listening to the stories of others. Remain open to learning from students, regard their questions and passionate viewpoints as opportunities for bringing more than I can contain.
- Sum up main points raised during storytelling activities.
- Combine different stories to show what has been achieved in their learning, progress made in relationships and moral reasoning and new insights gained about citizenship and their civic responsibilities. Also indicate those things which still remain an issue. Make a note of these for future reference. The larger story arrived at from the combined stories can be presented on posters for wall displays.
- In end of unit tests, remember to include questions formulated from the storytelling activities which further help to support the credibility of the new teaching style.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REFLECTIONS**

How has Bethany's case study supported and extended our understanding of the place of spirit in the pedagogical relation? How has it enabled her to address some of the challenges she is facing in her quest to find new ways of re-building relationships with her students?

Bethany's case illustrates how an experienced black woman senior manager is striving to evolve her practice and relationships with students at the intersections of a number of cultural influences and professional challenges. First, she is having to confront the realisation that the cultural bias which she used in the past to inform how she formed authority relations with her students is no longer considered to be legitimate grounds for her to expect respect from Afro-Caribbean students. In addition to this she finds herself witnessing a worrying trend in her school of the active positioning of students into different groupings based on race and religious

affiliations and their pervading sense of helplessness about events happening around them, both locally and in the world. Bethany interprets these forms of student action as representing the effects that world terrorism is having on civic societies generally. Although not a new form of violence, its linkage with modern technologies and instruments of globalism exposes students nowadays to how easily terrorists can spread their work and violence through such things as the internet or expand their activities through highly developed networks of commercial airlines. Bethany considers this a major threat which is generating anxiety, wariness and a sense of crisis, not least among the young who are making their own meanings and responses to the threats they perceive.

What Bethany's case study serves to illustrate is that schools have become one of the sites where students are symbolically acting out their personal responses to what is occurring in the world around them. This has forced Bethany to come to terms with the effects that this is having on her ability to maintain the kinds of relations with students which had worked in the past. But, perhaps more importantly, it has forced her to consider critically the implications of student responses to her teaching of the citizenship curriculum, and how she may enrich this curriculum through the inclusion of student voices and the meanings they are making about the world.

In order to address some of these challenges Bethany and I looked for new sources of inspiration, first from Buber's writings on the importance of education for character building as a commitment to students as persons, with their own thoughts, fears and outlook on life. Secondly, it inspired Bethany to rediscover her talent as a storyteller and her knowledge of the storyteller's art which we used to generate a framework of ideas, as a pedagogic tool for teaching citizenship education which included students' stories.

In our review of teachers' responses to the framework which Bethany subsequently brought up for discussion at one of her staff meetings, Bethany said that some of her colleagues had shown resistance to implementing the frame. Their resistance, Bethany explained, did not stem so much from the prospect of storytelling and including students' stories in curricular activities, but from the norm of what is considered to be the "acceptable" institutional responses for representing the views of

different cultural groups, which generally amounted to celebrating certain festivals and cultural events. Bethany felt that, if teachers are to help students to participate in the kinds of civic actions required by the curriculum in more student centred ways, they will need support to come to a new understanding of the changes occurring in diverse student communities. Specifically, that student positionings will need to be respected and given legitimacy, not only in terms of recognising and celebrating cultural events and festivities, but also in terms of re-thinking curricular practices and the possibilities presented for forging new kinds of relationships between teacher, student and the world.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*“...spirit can penetrate and transform the world of It” (Buber, 1958a)*

This final part of my study draws together the main outcomes of the case studies and comments on how they have extended and enriched our knowledge of spirit in pedagogical relations as an embodied practice. Four main ways will be discussed below, these are: (1) as storied knowledge: (2) as curriculum knowledge: (3) as a proactive practice, and (4) as a value position. Leading on from this I will also consider how the findings might support the development of pedagogical practice in teacher education programmes. If my hope is for pedagogical practice to become radically relational through a deeper recognition and valuing of pedagogies of spirit, we will need to explore how teacher educators might include this level of commitment in their work. I will therefore conclude with some suggestions for a framework which support the continued reconstruction of a spirit orientated pedagogy in four areas of teacher education programmes

### STORIED KNOWLEDGE

In the case studies we saw how Sarah's and Bethany's accounts of significant pedagogical relationships were enlivened by telling a story about it. These storied accounts supported the production of meaning in a number of ways. They enabled the illumination of important themes which helped the analysis of what was distinctive about the particular event, people, relationships and experience being depicted by the story. Analysing the complexities of the pedagogical experience through each story theme also enabled links to be made between concrete experience and the wider theoretical and philosophical discourses - which further helped to deepen our knowledge of spirit as an embodied practice. In this way stories served to enliven theory by bringing experiential meaning and connection. Another way in which stories were active in the production of meaning is the transformative effects they had on participants. The transformative power of story was particularly evident in Sarah's account of her RE teacher when she was a learner. Not only was this story a good example of how memories of a teacher as a significant role model can leave a lasting impression of students, but the recollection and telling of it transformed Sarah's understanding of the true significance of this teacher's influence. As a great character and role model, she gave educative power to RE as a subject discipline not only

through her teaching example but also her investment in Sarah's life. As a result, Sarah was inspired and motivated at a very deep level to follow in her footsteps and become an RE teacher.

Based on the outcomes of this study, stories of experience appear to be an effective medium through which human experience as lived can be expressed and important knowledge about spirit in the pedagogical relation can be gained.

## **CURRICULUM KNOWLEDGE**

The outcomes also have implications for how we understand and use curriculum knowledge. They suggest that no matter how carefully prescribed a curriculum may be with statements of objectives, pre-specified teacher's actions and appropriate student responses – in reality teachers and students come together in encounters whose outcome cannot be predicted beforehand. For instance, in Bethany's description of the citizenship curriculum we saw how it became an instrument that not only generated confusion among different ethnic groups, but became a real barrier for Bethany in her relationships with students. Through reflection and dialogue on this curriculum story, we were able to see the tension that was revealed between viewing curriculum as merely objective knowledge, something to know about and viewing it as process with wider possibilities. Using her talent as a storyteller Bethany was able to bring the spirit concepts of *inspiration* and *voice* to the process of enriching her teaching of the citizenship curriculum through incorporating student voices and the meanings they were making about the world. This story is therefore a good example of how spirit in pedagogical relations can be achieved in a specific curricular area by engaging the content of the curriculum with the specific issues that are important to students both personally and morally. Allowing complex and troubled experiences which students have around race, religion and culture room for expression eliminates the need to repress them, builds character and enables the abstract principles of the curriculum to engage with the world of realities.

## **A PROACTIVE PRACTICE**

With a focus on relations, we begin to realise that the classroom is not the only place where pedagogical possibilities around the theme of spirit can flourish. Schools can also serve as institutional examples if we regard them as developmental by nature,



that is, as places where new pedagogical structures can be brought into being. Sarah's story of her initiation and development of the Breakfast Club provides a good example of how teachers can take a proactive stance as creative and intentional agents to bring about positive change. Sarah's account of the Breakfast Club was a story of how she was able to bring together a group of students, staff and eventually local people together into a voluntary association of persons, united by common concerns and values, to enable personal relations to flourish within the larger functional organisation of the school. For Sarah, this initiative not only provided a means of developing a new pedagogical structure in the school but also a means of incorporating a core of human goals which gave significance to what took place between people. Through her proactive stance, Sarah's actions served to bring the school closer to being a person-centred institution. More importantly her account provides us with an example of how spirit orientated pedagogical structures can be developed in the wider school context.

From the case studies we also saw how pedagogies of spirit entail a focus on developing and using a wider range of skills which come from re-discovering special talents, making conceptual distinctions and acting intentional to generate new frameworks for action.

## **A VALUE POSITION**

As a value position spirit in pedagogical relations places emphasis on the quality of the relationship between teacher and learner which cannot be replaced by demands for high test scores and performance. A teacher with spirit recognises that the current dominant discourse excludes serious consideration being given to this aspect of her work and that she cannot convey spirit without moving beyond the I/It objectifying attitude. She therefore works proactively to explore and develop alternative ways of re-establishing genuine human encounter and relationship. Intentionally she chooses from a richer framework of practices which support her in developing the qualities, skills, practices and structures which make pedagogical relations possible.

As I have argued in Part 2 of this thesis, there are considerable constraints to spirit in current mainstream education and pedagogy, a view supported by case study participants. The question must be raised as to whom does spirit in pedagogical

relations speak? Who constitutes the audience and best placed to continue the reconstruction of pedagogies of spirit in education? These cases suggest that teachers new to the profession represent one promising group for promoting spirit orientated changes. Another group is experienced teachers who require help and support to re-think meanings such as race, religion and ethnicity for citizenship in the light of changes occurring in diverse student communities. If the trend is correct, a third group consists of teachers who have become more deliberately eclectic and pragmatic in their choices of practices than previously. The time is right, therefore, for a pedagogy – in an enlarged sense – that includes both what has been traditionally defined as pedagogy together with new visions and ideas for expanding the practice.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION**

In a spirit orientated pedagogy, teacher education is considered to be a continuous process, beginning in pre-service preparation programmes, and renewed subsequently through in-service professional development courses and workshops. A re-evaluation of pre-service programmes is therefore the first place to start to determine whether spaces exist for the increase of democratic possibility, and hence new pedagogical stances. The intention of spirit in pedagogical relations, as a reconstructive practice, is not to replace one practice with another. It is rather to provide pre-service teachers with the opportunities to explore how pedagogical relations can be conceptualised and developed, using practices which have previously been given scant attention.

In earlier chapters I have theorised this relational perspective by making connections to the moral, spiritual and religious realms. I have also explored philosophical perspectives which envisage the relational possibilities of spirit as cultivating an I/Thou attitude, possibilities for ethical responsibility and new pedagogical structures which promote the spirit of community. I have argued that in order to develop pedagogies of spirit we need to draw on these perspectives to extend traditional meanings and also overcome the narrowness of technocratic orientated practice.

It is suggested, therefore, that an active commitment on the part of teacher educators would require asking difficult questions about the type of knowledge-base and experiences currently being provided for pre-service teachers. In other words, teacher

educators would need to interrogate their own assumptions and the norms instantiated and practised in their programmes.

What might a suggested framework look like for including a spirit orientated pedagogy? Based on my theorising and what we have learnt from the empirical exemplifications, I suggest a framework which identifies four areas for supporting continued reconstruction in pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes. These are: (1) including a focus on the pedagogical relationship as an explicit programme theme around which a knowledge base of spirit orientated theories and approaches can be developed; (2) using pre-service field experiences to promote spirit orientated observation and reflective practices; (3) planning in-service professional development short courses which provide support for new teachers in the first two years of teaching; and (4) utilising school/university partnerships as a context for dialogue and reconstruction through collaborative working.

1. Incorporating a focus on the pedagogical relationship as a programme theme for pre-service teacher education provides a way of introducing student teachers to some of the foundational and philosophical underpinnings for spirit in pedagogical relations. Particular significance might, as here, be given to the ideas of Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas and John Macmurray – either individually or collectively – as a means of raising student teachers’ awareness of the contribution and implications of their ideas for the development of a pedagogy of relations. Based on this theoretical foundation, or one like it, student teachers could then be introduced to alternative ways of putting theory into practice, using the following suggested sub-themes:

- i. The relational possibilities and practices for working with “at risk” students.
- ii. Re-thinking issues of race, religion and ethnicity relationally.
- iii. Person-centred approaches to teaching and learning.

2. One of the requirements of pre-service teacher education is the field experience where student teachers are provided with opportunities to observe experienced teachers at work. This provides another context where student teachers can be supported to develop spirit orientated approaches and practices. Teacher educators would need to take a stand here in refusing to place student teachers in classrooms

where there are teachers who do not consistently and rigorously question all aspects of their practices and the profession. High impact teachers, who have a good track record of success, in facilitating good relationships and developing personalised learning environments, will need to be sought out as role models.

Rather than providing student teachers with a checklist of teaching and learning competences, a spirit orientated observation framework focuses on specific classroom encounters which promote relational approaches to teaching and learning. Such a framework might include the following stages:

***Preparation Stage*** – This stage provides an opportunity for student and in-service teacher to meet prior to the observation, in order to agree a particular relational approach that the student teacher will observe. For example, an agreement may be reached that the in-service teacher will model how she is incorporating *acts of second position inclusion* in the course of her teaching. Or the student teacher may wish to learn how the in-service teacher is using relational approaches such as *dialogue* during group-work to develop different kinds of student relationships.

***Observation Stage*** – The challenge for the student teacher at the start of the observation is to become detached from prior beliefs or expectations, in order to remain open and curious about the relational event as it unfolds. The student teacher writes a description of the actions modelled by the in-service teacher and also records different student responses. In addition, the record should include any beliefs and values voiced during the event. It is important that the student teacher remain alert to her own internal dialogue and thinking, as thoughts generated from such a process provide a good source of questions which can be discussed with the in-service teacher at the end of the observation.

***Post-observation questions and reflection*** – Following the observation, student and in-service teacher agree a mutually convenient time to meet in order to discuss what has been learnt from the process. Questions addressed to the in-service teacher, although depending on individual interest, should be ones which have evolved from the observation process. This stage of the observation provides an opportunity to

clarify understandings and arrive at a shared perspective about the different features of the relational approach.

Later, when re-reading and reflecting on written descriptions of the different relational approaches observed in field experiences, it is important that student teachers are supported to make links between the theories presented in their courses and the concrete examples of practice observed in school settings.

3. Planning a follow-up programme of short courses to support new teachers in their first two years of teaching is important for helping them to embody fully, and sustain, the relational practices and skills they acquired during pre-service training. Such a programme should create opportunities for dialogue and the sharing of stories and experiences around significant relational issues encountered in different school contexts. It is also important to include a focus on emotions, the possibilities for self illumination and the exercise of agency, thereby helping new teachers to reduce any feelings of guilt or victimisation which may have been experienced as a result of using the new approaches.

4. School/University partnerships, which bring together schools and teacher educators, provide another context for the reconstruction process. Setting an agenda for change would include asking relevant questions, such as; do partnership arrangements encourage committed university teachers to return periodically to full-time school teaching so that they can better understand changes in relational issues and needs from first hand experience? Does it provide opportunities to plan new frameworks, teach and conduct research from a diversity of viewpoints, and work collaboratively with classroom teachers from different cultural groups?

Accepting that the perspectives and practice assumptions of spirit in pedagogical relations is a realistic aim, is it fair to expect a typical (surviving) teacher to actively attempt to negotiate beyond the status quo in favour of a new pedagogical stance? In answer to this question I am reminded that the importance of the pedagogical relation is not something new; its promulgation and practices have been around for a long time – as argued in earlier chapters – and continue to be successful. This is particularly the case in the work of contemporary contributors who privilege the importance of care,

pedagogical tact and person centred teaching approaches as a means of building productive relations between teacher and pupil (for example, the works of Noddings (1984), Van Manen (1991) and Fielding (2000b). What spirit in pedagogical relations brings is another outlook which does not try to replace one set of practices with another, but serves rather to draw attention to the possibilities of overcoming *distance* with *relation* in every act of teaching.

## REFLECTIONS AND CONTINUITY

In bringing to an end the written phase of this work I have a sense of closure. I have completed what I set out to achieve, which was to attempt to raise awareness of the importance of the pedagogical relation as a distinctive practice and to contribute the theme of Spirit to its ongoing development and vitality. However, the sense of having reached my destination should not be interpreted as an ending, nor as an abandonment of all that I have discussed up to this point, but as a place to stop for a while so that I can take stock and reflect on what I have learned.

Writing this thesis has enabled me to tease out the influences, ideas and passion which continue to fuel my interest in education. It has helped me to connect to the larger presence and work of Spirit, which comes through the different standpoints: its work in the writings of Buber, Levinas and Macmurray; and its presence in the stories which Sarah and Bethany tell of their experience and ongoing work.

The process has also been transformative. I have found, for example, that certain insights gained through my engagement with the work of Buber, Levinas and Macmurray have moved from a surface learning to a deeper understanding and inward growth of Spirit. Buber's concept of the *great character* is a case in point. Through the deep integration of this idea I have come to realise that not only can I bring *presence* and *responsibility* to the uniqueness of every situation, but I can awaken responsibility in others through the movement of my *wholeness* as a person. What this has come to mean to me is not a conscious thinking of how to be a whole person, but how I can respond to any given situation in a unique, integrated and *relational* way.

Similarly Levinas's contribution has increased my understanding of the importance of the strictly *ethical* meaning of responsibility, taking me beyond the narrow talk of rights that hold the ethical enclosed in moral reasoning. Faced with the *Other* I have a surplus beyond what I need – a sense of *infinite responsibility* that deepens my obligation to answer the *Other's* call. This is what brings out the first meaning, the ethical meaning, of who I am as a human being. From Macmurray I have gained a new appreciation of the meaning of religion as the expression of consciousness of *community* which I can bring to the task of strengthening the presence of the *personal* in my functional relations.

A further transformation has entailed a greater appreciation of the importance of including the student "voice" in research. Interestingly, it was through reflecting once again on the teachers' stories that the voices of some of their students strongly came through, serving to underscore in my mind the inherent value of including the perspectives of the young. Young people possess knowledge and understanding of relationships and schools which is not necessarily known to teachers. The very fact that one never really knows what they are thinking or understanding is a mark not only of their otherness but also of their free will.

During a recent school visit, a headteacher asked me what she could do to support a whole school approach to some of the ideas, meanings and practices along the lines of those presented in this thesis. I want to finish, therefore, on an optimistic note for the future with four suggestions whereby school leaders might begin the process of supporting an enabling school ethos where Spirit orientated pedagogies can flourish. As suggestions they are intended to stimulate dialogue and creative agency rather than implying the definitive answer or way forward. The suggestions are as follows:

1. Including a specific aim in the school's mission statement, clearly stating how the school intends to foster human growth through a clear focus on the pedagogical relationship.
2. Creating opportunities for staff and students to explore the "shadow side" of the organisation – for example, where we are now, which practices conflict with our new vision, and what do we want to change? It is important during

this process to allow room for competing pedagogical identities and value positions to be aired and discussed. Animate the process of change in line with the new vision through renewed meeting and dialogue.

3. Strengthening the expectation of the personal in the functional by providing the resources, encouragement and feedback for those teachers who are motivated to initiate new projects or school activities which bring a sense of community to school life.
4. Incorporating an ethical challenge to the development of school ethos by going beyond the official statements (the “said”) to envision implicitly an infinite number of possible actions for responding to the call of spirit as *Other*.

I am reminded of what Steven Smith (1988, p.57) says about why we use spirit-words in common language. We do this, he suggests, to refer to an extraordinary life that is better and more authoritative. The spirit of fair play *claims* players. Public-spirited people are *more admirable*. School spirit *enhances* school life: every student who lacks it dampens life for the others directly or indirectly. To be someone in spirit is a crucial *redeeming* kind of companionship. A spiritual person is a *higher* kind.

Finally, my hope for the continuing vitality of this work is signalled both in its title and in the positive signs that there are teachers who continue to feel pedagogically responsible for the relations they develop with their students and the kinds of persons they are preparing them to become. Although not a conventional study, in the traditional sense of research, it is my hope that this work will be regarded as foundational – as representing the groundwork, so to speak, for the start of a concrete philosophy of Spirit for the pedagogical relation.



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# **APPENDIX 1**

## **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **SECTION A – BACKGROUND**

- A1 Tell me a little about yourself: how long have you been a teacher?
- A2 During this time, have you always taught RE?
- A3 Is this the only school you have taught in? Have you taught in any other schools?
- A4 How long have you taught in your current school?
- A5 What was it about your subject specialism that motivated you to become an RE teacher?

### **SECTION B – REFLECTION ON THE PEDAGOGICAL RELATIONSHIP**

- B1 Before entering the teaching profession, what perceptions did you have of the pedagogical relationship? From these perceptions, what was important to you?
- B2 Tell me something that is important for you now, in how you are relating to learners
- In this context, what do you care about?
  - What do you think about?
- B3 How have your perceptions of pedagogical relationship changed over time?
- B4 Through participating in this research what do you most value?
- B5 In the context of pedagogical relationships, how do you perceive your role developing in the future?

## APPENDIX 2

**TABLE 1 – EMERGENT THEMES AND SUPPORTIVE DATA**

**Participant 1 – Sarah**

Emergent Theme	Supporting data pertaining to:
<b>Teacher as a Significant role model</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her knowledge of teachers who have had an influence on her life</li> <li>• Intensity of her feelings for her old RE teacher when she was a learner had opened in her a new understanding of possibilities for pedagogical relationships</li> <li>• Learned from this teacher the important value of making a personal response and the difference that a committed individual can make</li> <li>• Commitments RE teacher made to Sarah's life through her teaching style/ method, as personal counsellor and as a helper</li> <li>• Explains how RE teacher had built strength into her formative ideas about learning through faith in the healing miracles and symbolism of St Marks Gospel</li> <li>• "Opened up an extra dynamic", Sarah's awareness of a new part to her personality</li> <li>• How this growing understanding and interest had enticed her into taking the "A" level and ultimately into teaching as RE teacher</li> <li>• Wonders what RE teacher is doing today, if she could possibly understand her influence</li> </ul>
<b>Social ideals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-service training inspired her thinking and motivation to help disadvantaged pupils</li> <li>• Belief that disadvantaged pupils are being marginalised by impersonal school structures</li> <li>• Based on ideals, chose to work in poor inner city borough</li> <li>• Schools need to understand poverty and disadvantage that pupils experience in their communities so that they can implement worthwhile strategies for inclusion</li> <li>• Belief that teachers must play an active part in transforming impersonal structures</li> <li>• Gives practical example of social disadvantage – having to get into school early to stick the shoe soles of some pupils because parents cannot afford to/ were not interested enough to buy new shoes</li> <li>• How socio-economic conditions facing pupils had moved her to take an active role in creating and organising the running of the school's Breakfast Club</li> <li>• The personal in the pedagogical experience is important and, for her, means knowing when to establish human relationships and new pedagogical structures to meet the inclusion needs of disadvantaged pupils</li> </ul>
<b>Breakfast Club Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story of Sarah's involvement in developing new structure in the school as human response to plight of disadvantaged youngsters</li> <li>• Feelings of doing something right, doing something worthwhile, meeting ideals</li> <li>• Incorporating human goals to balance projects' more instrumental objectives</li> <li>• Breakfast Club fostered greater opportunities for relationships to</li> </ul>

	<p>develop between staff, pupils and community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fostered new opportunities for cross-curricular relationships, and new teaching ideas</li> <li>• Fostered community spirit, Breakfast Club was part of school's formal structure, but also allowed for greater links with community</li> </ul>
<b>Face-to-face conflict</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story of failure to respond appropriately in a face-to-face confrontation led to misunderstanding and escalation</li> <li>• Pupil told off for spitting, telling off had no (apparent) effect. Pupil responds by swearing, calling names</li> <li>• Other pupils blame one particular pupil for being trouble maker, leading to escalation of incident and marginalisation of pupil</li> <li>• Story contains a number of subplots</li> <li>• Pupil not taking responsibility for actions, sneaks out at end of lesson</li> <li>• Sarah at loss as to how to respond appropriately makes inappropriate comment , notices expression on face of pupil</li> <li>• Strong emotions felt by Sarah – feeling angry, guilty and “cut deeply” (guilt traps of teaching). Incident causes Sarah stress: taking incident home, lack of sleep, replaying whole incident over and over again</li> <li>• Fears that she is beginning to get herself caught in “feeling traps”, small things now taking longer to let go, getting feelings about feelings</li> <li>• Feels guilty – not being on top of things, guilty feeling about letting down pupils and others who deserve better</li> <li>• Feels she is responding and acting against her ideals, very upset about this</li> </ul>



**TABLE 2 – EMERGENT THEMES AND SUPPORTIVE DATA****Participant 2 – Bethany**

<b>Emergent Theme</b>	<b>Supporting data pertaining to:</b>
<b>Cultural influences/ authority relations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story of influence of cultural background on understanding of authority relations</li> <li>• Self-identification – Afro-Caribbean woman teacher from strong Christian and supportive church community</li> <li>• Her explanation of the role of respect in relationships between young people and adults</li> <li>• How respect is won and how it is lost in “respected authority”</li> <li>• How the young treat adults when respected authority is lost</li> <li>• Uses insider knowledge to inform how she approaches the pedagogical relations in the school</li> <li>• Talks about her success in developing strong bonds with Afro-Caribbean pupils and families</li> </ul>
<b>Student positioning in relation to others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notices trend in school of students positioning themselves in particular ethnic and religious groups</li> <li>• Her knowledge of what is motivating this behaviour – showing pride and commitment in own race and religion</li> <li>• Her argument about students feeling a sense of civic trauma</li> <li>• Her feelings about progressive deterioration occurring in her relations with Afro-Caribbean pupils</li> <li>• Incident in citizenship class, conflict created over Muslim girls allowed to wear headwear in some places and headgear in others (significant?)</li> <li>• Her knowledge of confusion caused by citizenship curriculum among ethnic groups</li> <li>• Feeling strongly that citizenship curriculum responsible for creating barrier between her and students and between different ethnic groups</li> <li>• Her knowledge and views about the citizenship curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>Student resistance/ loss of respected authority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story of an incident in assembly causing Bethany much distress</li> <li>• Her feelings that this incident alone has shaken the foundations on which she has built relationships with pupils</li> <li>• Feels strongly that there has to be respected authority in pedagogical relationship, otherwise teachers have to rely on threats, coercion and punishment</li> <li>• Her shock and distress at being called “white fodder” by pupils – having her identity and authority as an Afro-Caribbean adult publicly questioned</li> <li>• Suspects girl with headgear. Having to accept loss of respected authority, knowledge about her emotions around this loss</li> <li>• Her role as a senior manager – push and pull feelings of uncertainty – role conflict</li> <li>• Feeling threatened as the only female, black senior manager in school – being among dominant masculinity</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking of a quest which is on the one hand deeply personal (having to reach beyond the perceived limits of race and on the other hand trying to maintain connections with Afro-Caribbean pupils. Wants to understand complexities and ways to rebuild relationships.</li> </ul>
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